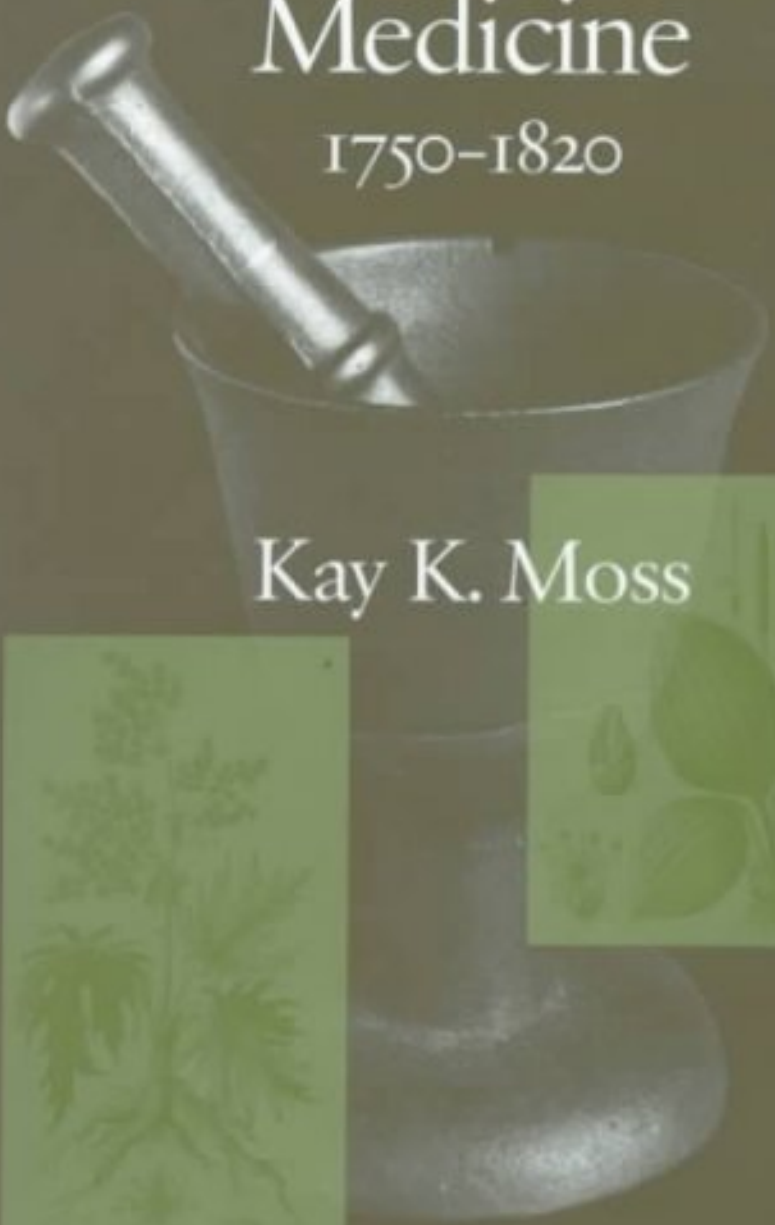
Southern Folk Medicine

1750–1820



Kay K. Moss

Southern Folk Medicine 1750–1820

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PREFACE

Fear, helplessness, and overwhelming dread sweeps over the backcountry housewife at first glimpse of the boy's ashen face. Although breathless and exhausted from the trail, this young nephew begs her to set out with him at once. Every hour has found his mother—the woman's younger sister—sinking lower since being stricken with a fever two days earlier. They dare not delay. The shadows are lengthening. The roads are miry and the river swollen by early spring rains, but if the South Fork of the Catawba can be crossed before darkness falls, they should reach the ailing woman's bedside by midnight. As the herb woman hurriedly packs the medicine box, her mind swarms with possibilities.

What might be the cause of this fever? Which remedies should she try? Intermitting fevers, caused by the miasma rising from marshes in late summer, are not common in this season. This illness is more likely the influenza or a malignant fever. Luckily, she has a supply of Peruvian bark fresh from Charleston, for everyone knows that a strong bitters of bark with snakeroot is good for any fever. Brandy will be needed to draw the essence from the herbs. Just to be sure, a dooryard remedy might be used along with the exotic bark.

Of course this land is so rich in bitter vegetables that many folk think buying the imported bark a little foolish. The woman thinks, "Perhaps I will brew up some of Mother's fever cure from long plantain, dandy lion roots, and ground ivy. I dare not take time to dig those bitter herbs now, but I will surely be able to find them later.

"I hope someone has already thought to let blood from my dear sister's feet; a fever requires that. I will take along my lancet just in case. The distraught boy does not know his mother's symptoms, other than the fever. Might this be a late case of the putrid throat sickness that has been so dreadful this past winter? And certainly the fluxes can be serious at any time of year. I hope there is butter and salt enough for a rich chicken broth. I'll put that on to simmer soon after I arrive. I remember a large walnut tree near my sister's house that will supply a purge or vomit if needed. Care must be taken in collecting the walnut bark, for bark peeled upwardly off the tree can cause vomiting, while bark peeled down off the tree will act downwardly in the body. If Mother were only here she would know just what to do! Luckily, she taught me some of her remedies and encouraged me to copy her receipts into my own medicine book. She would be proud now that I am so often able to help family and neighbors.

"But now it is my own dearest sister who is ill—she who has seven small children with one still at the breast, she who spins the strongest linen warp thread, she who can drive the oxen to plowing almost as handily as her husband,

she who bakes the most delicious plumb cake, she who dances so merrily after the corn shucking . . ."

This imagined herb woman is a composite of the domestic healers glimpsed through journals, letters, and commonplace books. Let your mind further explore early southern medical problems and practices as you also delve into personal writings from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries brought together in this book.

Southern Folk Medicine sets before you cures and theories known to early European-American settlers in the South and leads you into exploring interrelationships among their folk practices. Twelve manuscript books of remedies from southern men and women (ca. 1750–1820) have been compared with other period sources. In many instances I have pinpointed the origin of a given remedy. Other cures have been shown to fit into the broader traditions of the period; however, the source of several of these domestic treatments eluded discovery. Some remedies may indeed be original and unique to a given practitioner or locale.

I have defied my computer's spelling checker to retain the creative orthography and punctuation of the original manuscripts. The charm of their wording lends an additional bit of insight into concerns and values of those early practitioners. I believe that readers will appreciate this unaltered collection of quotations from primary sources perhaps as much as my notes, comparisons, and conclusions.

Botanical nomenclature is a stumbling block in attempting to unravel early source materials as both common and scientific names change. When special difficulty was encountered in attempting to identify a given herb, alternate possibilities have been listed or a degree of uncertainty indicated.

While obsolete terms and antiquated ideas form an inseparable part of this story of domestic medicine, the language can be confusing. Refer to section 3, "A Domestic Materia Medica," for identification and specifics on each medical ingredient. See also the "Selected List of Works Consulted" and notes. The index has been carefully prepared to guide readers to specific topics, while the appendixes provide supplementary material for those less familiar with eighteenth-century medicine. For a general discussion of diseases common to the period, see chapter 3. Chapters 4–14 are organized according to historic classification of illness. Chapter 2 describes the central twelve manuscripts and provides a brief overview of other primary sources.

Through twenty years of researching lifeways on the early Carolina frontier I have become increasingly fascinated with curious bits of medical traditions uncovered in primary sources. At the same time I have been frustrated by a lack of documentation and focus in many published works on folk remedies. This curiosity and frustration have led me to follow threads of information surviving from the pens of everyday folk. This book began in response to many requests for

information and to the overwhelming popularity of museum programming dealing with early folk medicine. Investigating health, illness, and medical practices lends a more intimate and personal aspect to the study of any culture. Interpreters of history should find in this rich material a compelling story. This book is intended for students, teachers, researchers, museum or historic site interpreters, armchair history buffs, and anyone who is merely curious. While immersing yourself in the medical mind-set of two centuries ago, please remain aware that these pages offer only a lesson in social history. This collection of lore does not constitute medical advice for today.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exploration of pre-1820 southerners' health and disease has generally led me into fascinating personal manuscripts and representative volumes from domestic libraries. However, I have found unsettling one topic much discussed in period literature—diseases of the studious and sedentary! Let me share an eighteenth-century perspective from William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine:*

> Intense thinking is so destructive to health. . . . It in a manner unhinges the whole human frame, and not only hurts the vital motions, but disorders the mind itself. Hence a delirium, melancholy, and even madness, are often the effect of close application to study. . . . Perpetual thinkers, as they are called, seldom think long. In a few years they generally become quite stupid.

I hope Buchan was wrong. This volume was prepared with great care and continuing enthusiasm. Although details were fretted over, checked and double-checked, misconceptions or incomplete understandings undoubtedly remain. Responsibility for accuracy in this study is of course purely mine.

Dozens of patient researchers and "keepers" of documents provided valuable assistance in discovering and analyzing the personal manuscripts on which this study is based. David Moltke-Hansen, Richard Schroeder, and John White of the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; William Erwin of Duke University's Special Collections; J. R. Langford and Steve Massengel of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh; Pat Hash, Alexander Moore, and Peter Wilkerson of the South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston; Jane Brown and Betty Newsome of Waring Historical Library, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston; Sara-Patsy Knight of Coy C. Carpenter Library, Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Jim Hoyd and Nick Wyman of Special Collections, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Charles LeCount of the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh; the staff of the Caroliniana Collection, University of South Carolina, Columbia; the archivists at the Archives of the Moravian Church in America, Southern Province; Paula Locklair of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts and Old Salem, Inc., Winston-Salem, North Carolina. All of these people as well as others at these institutions played an important part in guiding me deeper into the primary materials as my skills in interpreting and comparing sources developed. David Cherry and George Allen generously shared information from privately owned manuscripts. The reference staff of Gaston County Public Library, North Carolina, were unfailingly helpful in procuring numerous books and

articles through interlibrary connections and in assisting me in finding answers to a plethora of questions.

> A mere student is seldom an useful member of society. . . . The farther men dive into profound researches, they generally deviate the more from common sense, and too often lose sight of it altogether. (Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*)

My curiosity led me in a dozen directions in attempting to answer all the questions stimulated by the fragments of home medical practice I uncovered. I regularly found myself over my head in respect to the depth of medical and botanical knowledge needed. Many learned men and women—historical researchers, scientists, and philosophers—came to my aid. My strictest readers were Claire Pittman of the history department, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina; James Daniel, an independent historical researcher; and Susan Moss Krause, a pharmacist. Their criticisms and suggestions have been heeded, leading me to a final version of this book that I believe is both clear and interesting. Michael Bush, Stowe Botanical Gardens, Gastonia, North Carolina, and Richard Porcher, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina, guided me in unraveling the botanical tangle of medicinal plants.

> Learned men often contract a contempt for what they call trifling company. They are ashamed to be seen with any but philosophers. This however is no proof of their being philosophers themselves. (Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*)

Far from expressing contempt for my trifling company, these learned men and women generously shared time and expertise. Their patience and encouragement were important factors in my completing this work. I do realize that being seen with these philosophers has not made me one. Nevertheless, this book reflects wisdom gained from each of them.

> [There is] no greater proof of wisdom than for a man [or woman, I suppose] to unbend his mind. This may generally be done by mixing in cheerful company, active diversions, or the like. (Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*)

Many additional scholars and friends provided "cheerful company" and "active diversions" while posing insightful questions and arguments that served to deepen my analysis of domestic medical traditions. Notable among this group were Carol Hall, Old Salem, Inc.; Patricia Veasey, Historic Brattonsville, South Carolina; Michael Eldredge, Duane Flynn, Alan May, Mike Peters, Suzanne Simmons, Ann Tippitt, and Steve Watts of Schiele Museum, Gastonia, North Carolina; Robert Pace, Knoxville, Tennessee; and Meg Moss, Ontario, Oregon.

My husband, Fred, contributed enormously to this project. As a practicing pharmacist he was not only interested in my findings but provided twentieth-

century perspectives. I was surprised at how often our dinnertime conversations that began with my "You won't believe what folks used to do . . . " continued with his "That remedy was still in use when I finished pharmacy school" in the early 1960s.

The University of South Carolina Press staff have been unfailingly helpful. I especially thank Alexander Moore, acquisitions editor, for his support and guidance, and Ellen Goldlust-Gingrich for editorial contributions.

We all can surely benefit from following Buchan's further instructions:

> avoid food that is windy . . . pay strict attention to sobriety . . . [give] attention to subjects of a more trivial nature [that] prove a kind of play to the mind. . . . spend a day, and sometimes two, with a cheerful friend . . . walking . . . or some mannerly diversions without doors. . . . cultivate a piece of ground . . . so as to make it both an exercise and amusement. . . . the very smell of the earth and fresh herbs revive and cheers the spirits. After working an hour in a garden, a man will return with more keenness to his employment within doors. (Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*)

INTRODUCTION

A richly textured tale of domestic medical practices can be woven from personal manuscripts—commonplace books, letters, and journals of eighteenth-century folk. The warp, the body of the fabric of this study, is taken from a dozen primary sources, personal medical memoranda related to the southern frontier. With special attention to the backcountry of the Carolinas, the approximate center of the southern settlements, supporting evidence was gathered from surrounding areas. This warp is checkered with a wider base of documentary evidence from throughout the Southeast during the years 1750 to 1820. Common curative practices in the more sophisticated coastal areas are shown to have differed very little from backcountry medicine. Indeed, medical opinions were traded, just as deer skins and iron tools passed hands, between frontier and port communities and between northern and southern settlements.

If the region covered by this study were extended, southern practices could be shown to have differed little from domestic medicine in the mid-Atlantic region or indeed throughout early America. However, a few medical concerns that may be considered distinctively, though not exclusively, southern resulted from the warmer climate and from the institution of slavery. These two factors produced a disease environment similar to West Africa in the coastal South. [1]

Along with time and place, national origins have been considered. The variety of sources consulted adds texture. Cultural groups were noted—Scottish, Irish (and Scots-Irish), English, German (including Moravian), Welsh, and French—in an attempt to sample a representative cross-section of southern settlers. Contact between these Europeans and Native Americans and Africans laid the foundations of a shared culture during the second half of the eighteenth century. Although slow to abandon customary cultural patterns in food, clothing, and housing, early Americans readily swapped medical folk wisdom. When familiar medicines did not achieve the needed results, the home practitioner looked to outside sources—first to friends and neighbors and then, if the situation grew more serious, to exotic traditions or even to experimentation. Necessity was the mother of invention, but desperation certainly fathered many folk remedies. Treatments for common ailments were passed down as family heirlooms. Medical lore was handed down by word of mouth or in the form of handwritten commonplace books.

Cures gleaned from published materials broadened the folk doctor's collection of medical receipts (recipes) and lore. The famous seventeenth-century herbals remained popular throughout the period covered by this investigation. In addition, many domestic health guides were published during the second half of

the eighteenth century and opening years of the nineteenth century. Throughout this comparison of domestic manuscripts is medical information from those published sources, which are known to have been available to everyday folk in the back settlements as well as to coastal plantation owners and townspeople.

Even the best medical minds of the period had a rather superficial knowledge of illness, remedy, and prevention. Many mysteries of the workings of the human body were yet to be solved. Fragmentary understanding of causes and courses of diseases compounded the difficulties of diagnosis. The folk doctor's prescriptions and treatments were often just as effective (or ineffective) as those of the physician.

There were few medical practitioners with formal training in the backcountry settlements. Where there were professional physicians, many were neither respected nor trusted. Home remedies were widely favored by early Americans of all classes and national origins, not only in the backcountry but in coastal cities and towns as well. The practice of medicine in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a homespun tradition.

Home medicine was actually the mainstream of healing practice in the lateeighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century South. Herb women, yeoman farmers, plantation mistresses, merchants, tradesmen, preachers, and quacks (practitioners with little formal training, not necessarily a derogatory title), worked with the same inventory of medical ingredients (materia medica) as physicians. Indeed well-versed lay practitioners were likely to have had knowledge of medical remedies equal to that of most trained physicians.

Ancient traditions and the (then) most up-to-date theories mix indiscriminately in these personal medical memoranda. Today's readers may recognize folk remedies that are still practiced. Other receipts will appear curious, amusing, disgusting, or dangerous and certainly outdated. Value judgments and medical analysis as to the efficacy of the practices are outside the scope of this work. Although I have indicated historical popularity of certain remedies, it is important to bear in mind that popularity did not prove effectiveness or safety. For example, bloodletting was quite popular, as was dosing with mercury. Repeated bloodlettings hastened the conclusion of George Washington's final illness, and Patrick Henry was poisoned by doses of mercury: both men were acting on the best medical advice of the day.

At the end of the eighteenth century Dr. David Ramsay wrote, "Let those who follow us in the 20th [century], have as much reason to respect our memories, as we have to venerate those who have gone before us." [2] Each of us can read these words from two centuries ago with a heightened appreciation for current advancements in medical knowledge. At the same time, we cannot overlook considering the progress that will be made in the next two hundred years. Perhaps we should leave such a note for the twenty-second century.

PART 1—
DOMESTIC MEDICINE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Chapter 1—
Much That May Be Called Domestic:
Every Man His Own Doctor

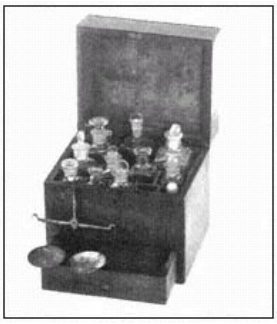
"In addition to the regular practice of medicine, there is much that may be called domestic."
David Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*

While the regular practice of medicine was conducted by physicians, surgeons, preachers, and quacks, there was "much that may be called domestic." Wealthy planters and merchants relied on home cures to a large extent, just as did craftspeople, farmers, and backcountry housewives. Whether well educated or unlettered, these self-reliant folk were armed with personal arsenals of favored remedies and treatments. Reliance on home treatment was stimulated by the low esteem in which many physicians were held along with the general unavailability of professional help and the high costs of services. Domestic health care was not considered inferior but was recognized as an essential part of the system. Even that champion of higher standards and licensing for physicians Dr. David Ramsay admitted, "The pride of science is sometimes humbled on seeing and hearing the many cures that are wrought by these pupils of experience, who, without theory or system, by observation and practice acquire a dexterity in curing common diseases." [1]

In training and experience domestic healers were often as well equipped as professionals. Unlike minimally trained doctors and quacks, these simple practitioners made few claims to more sophistication than they possessed. Ministering to household members and neighbors was commonly the extent of their practice. Among those with little formal training were honest and concerned individuals who fulfilled a genuine need in their communities.

Just such a doctor wrote the following apologies from Asheville, North Carolina, in 1810 to the famous Dr. Calvin Jones of Raleigh. The letter concluded with a request for advice on handling stubborn cases of gonorrhea by dosing with mercury. This lay practitioner was unhappily beyond his depth of knowledge and experience.

Domestic Medical Kit, early 1800s. Simmons family, Rutherford County, North Carolina. Homemade tulip poplar box with gourd container, pewter syringes, lancets, steel needle with gut twine, and later period (mid-nineteenth-century) glass vials. Courtesy North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh.



Medicine Chest, circa 1820. Newspaper advertisements document the availability of medicine chests purchased for home use. Courtesy Waring Historical Library, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston.

I have no knowledge in the Medical Art, but what was accidently, and I believe I may say reluctantly acquired. . . . to this day almost every man is his own physician. . . . And consequently I found myself under the Necessity of keeping a few simples for cases of emergency, and for want of the advice of a physician I was compell'd to consult Domestic Medicine, Family Physician, Primitive Physic, and what not? For although I ever detested the Idea of a plowman assuming the Character of a physician . . . a man will commit Sacriledge to Save life! . . . For my neighbors observing my little family practice, began to call on me for assistance. At first I denied them through shame and timidity, but at length yielded . . . so far as to make a few cautious attempts to snatch a patient from the Jaws of Death, which . . . served . . . to render me more and more popular. . . . I confess I am truly embarrassd with my Situation and often feel Shame and confusion . . . on being addressd

by the title of Doctor especially among real physicians who resort this place in Autumn for the benifit of health. [2]

Such a man or woman who regularly gave aid to ill or injured neighbors and family members was likely to be found in any community. These domestic practitioners were frequently highly esteemed. In fact, there are numerous examples in period writings to confirm that a folk doctor was likely to be more thoroughly trusted and respected than the professional physician. Such lay healers might have been quite knowledgeable.

The necessary information was readily at hand. The eighteenth century was a do-it-yourself era. Just a glance at an eighteenth-century gentleman's bookshelf was likely to reveal such titles as *Every Man His Own Lawyer and Cyclopedia; or, An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* in addition to *Every Man His Own Doctor*. Less sophisticated homes might have boasted a copy of William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* or John Wesley's *Primitive Physick*. Oral sharing of medical fact and lore was important at all social and economic levels.

Although little formal medical education was available for women, at least one woman acquired medical knowledge from an educated physician who boarded at her house on the Catawba River near Lancaster, South Carolina. Local herb women were likely to have been well versed in the basic materia medica. They had perhaps learned cures from older family members and added to this knowledge more bits of information from neighbors and travelers. If the women could read and had access to newspapers, almanacs, and a domestic medical guide or two, they were likely to be more knowledgeable than some doctors.[3]

Some herb women or yeoman farmers even acquired local renown for specific cures. Ailing persons might travel long distances to seek their help. One woman on Abbot's Creek in piedmont North Carolina became so famous for her supposed cures that German Moravians sought her services, although they boasted a physician in their community. On another occasion, an "English woman, who can cure cancer rode through" the Moravian settlement and was deluged with requests for advice and aid.[4]

The few necessary medical tools were readily available. A typical advertisement appeared in the *South Carolina Gazette* on January 10, 1743: "Just imported from London . . . a choice Assortment of fresh Drugs, Lancets, and Tooth Drawers." A clyster tube (enema syringe) was also likely to be part of the healer's kit. When these items were not available or if the expense were prohibitive, each item could be improvised—a knife for the lancet, blacksmith-made pliers for the tooth drawer, and a bladder with cane or bone tube for the clyster.

Domestic treatment of diseases and injuries constituted the bulk of eighteenth-century medical practice. The general independent spirit of the time fostered widespread self-reliance. Dr. Ramsay wrote of the accomplishments of folk healers, "under the guidance of experience they prescribe for the sick and often succeed beyond expectation." This compliment from one of Charleston's

best-known physicians assures us that the professional community did not overlook the importance of domestic medicine. Ramsay was not alone in professing high respect for domestic remedies. Even influential Philadelphian Dr. Benjamin Rush directed his medical students as follows: "When you go abroad always take a memorandum book and whenever you hear an old woman say such and such herbs are good, or such a compound makes a good medicine or ointment, put it down, for, gentlemen, you may need it." [5]

Chapter 2—
The Sources:
From the Pens of Eighteenth-Century Folk

Commonplace books from the pens of early southern folk yield intriguing glimpses into everyday life. The commonplace book or memorandum was a repository for any bit of information considered worthy of keeping for future reference. A wide range of practical notes may be found recorded in such documents—remedies, cookery recipes, dyes, household hints, accounts, agricultural notes, travel diaries, letters, poetry, and sermons.

These personal manuscript volumes ranged from multipurpose to specific. Some authors were specialists concentrating on a few consuming interests, while others were generalists, studying and noting much about the world around them. Then as today, some people were well organized and others were less meticulous. The personality of the journalists shine from the pages of their commonplace books.

When viewed together, this baker's dozen pre-1820 southern commonplace books offers a composite picture of domestic medical practice. Backcountry sources are balanced with coastal sources. Half of these memoranda appear to have been penned by women. Traditions from English, Irish, Scottish, German, and French origins are strong along with intriguing traces of American Indian and African influences. Two of these sources, the Rachel Allen and William Lenoir manuscript volumes, were entirely medical. Joshua Gordon's little book focused on witchcraft and sympathetic cures. Cookery and medical receipts were intermingled with other household concerns in the domestic memoranda of Eliza Lucas Pinckney, Harriott Pinckney Horry, Anne Cameron, Dorothea Christina Schmidt, and the unidentified author of the herbal and household book in the PrestonDavie Papers, Southern Historical Collection. The anonymous author of the commonplace book from the Waring Historical Library covered a broader range of notes related to household and plantation management. The Archibald Maclaine volume was quite the definitive commonplace book, reflecting a gentleman's active mind and wide interests, as were Frederic William Marshall's writings, while the Jacob Blount memorandum was a simpler, informal version. A frontiersman's equivalent, the John Thompson manuscript, contained a trip journal and assorted notes on pioneer matters in addition to remedies.

Remarkable neither in scope nor detail, these collections of cures nevertheless furnish a window through which to glimpse traditions current in the home

practice of physic. These manuscripts represent many other commonplace books that have not survived the centuries or that remain hidden in attics or barns. Documentation of the identity of the authors was judged of less consequence to this study than the documentation of southern medical traditions, especially in the backcountry settlements, at the close of the eighteenth century.

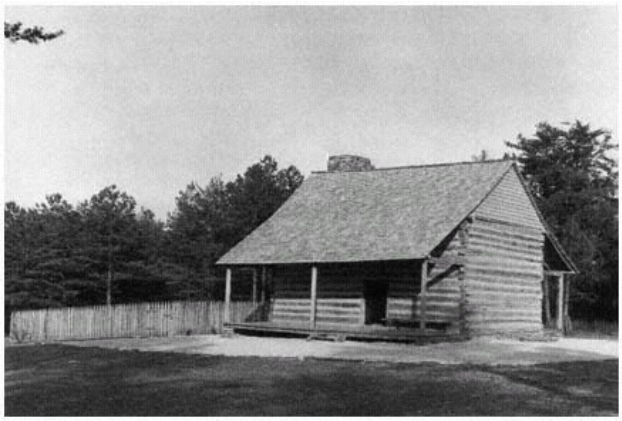
Each manuscript has been assigned a two-letter code for ease of identification throughout this book. The codes are included in parentheses after the name of the source.

Sources

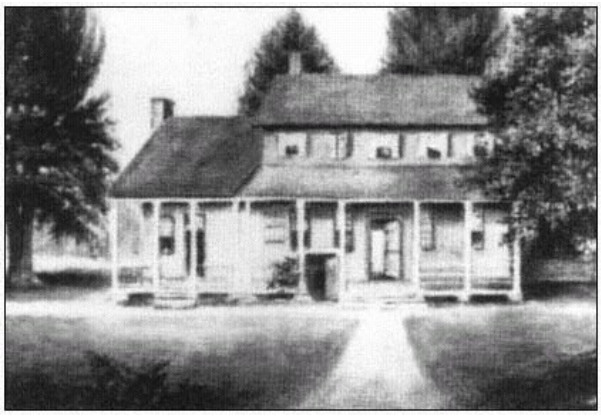
Rachel Stout Allen Medical Memorandum (Al), n.d.
(probably late 1700s), Piedmont North Carolina (Guilford County)

This manuscript is, more accurately, two volumes and several loose papers. Although the keeper of this medical memorandum neither signed nor dated its contents, oral family tradition attributes it to Rachel Stout Allen. Variations in handwriting suggest that more than one person may have contributed to the collection.

The Allen family was English Quaker. Rachel added German stock to the cultural soup. This family seems to typify backcountry self-sufficiency and diversification. Rachel's husband, John Allen III, was a farmer, schoolmaster, and law-



John and Rachel Allen House. Snow Camp, North Carolina, circa 1782. Moved and restored as a North Carolina State Historic site at Alamance Battleground, Burlington. Courtesy North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.



William Lenoir House, Fort Defiance. Caldwell County, North Carolina, circa 1788, additions 1822–23. As rendered by M. L. Michael, 1885.
Courtesy North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, and Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

yer, and a surviving daybook indicates that the Allens may have run a small store as well.

Popular medical guides of importance to this manuscript author included William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* and John Wesley's *Primitive Physick*. Some cures reflected traditions from the old, well-respected European herbal volumes known to have been available in the Carolina backcountry settlements, especially Nicholas Culpeper's *English Physician*.

Examination of the Allen collection of cures leads to the hypotheses that kidney stones were troublesome to at least one person under the care of this lay practitioner. Preparations reputed to be of assistance in kidney and bladder complaints outnumber all other remedies in the Allen manuscript.

William Lenoir Medical Memorandum (Ln), 1801–39,
Western North Carolina

Born in Brunswick County, Virginia, of French Huguenot parents, William Lenoir grew up in eastern North Carolina but moved west to Surry County as a young man of twenty-four in 1775. A military leader during the American Revolution, Lenoir held a variety of public offices before serving many years in the North Carolina state legislature. At the age of fifty Lenoir began compiling a book of cures, which he continued to expand for thirty-eight years. His great interest in horse breeding and racing is apparent in the large number of veteri-

nary cures recorded among remedies for human ailments. These treatments reflect the humoral theory and traditions from early herbals, which is not surprising since Lenoir was undoubtedly drawing on knowledge and experience from his younger days along with new ideas.

The Lenoir recipes were not only collected over a long period but also were gathered from many different sources. Many cures were credited to friends and acquaintances—men and women, domestic practitioners and doctors. Travelers contributed stories of marvelous cures from farther afield. In addition to those cures gathered from individuals, Lenoir collected medical receipts from almanacs and from newspapers, especially the *Raleigh Star*. Lenoir's careful record-keeping habits, needed in public service, carried over to his personal records.

This medical receipt book was a dynamic document, regularly consulted and expanded as new information was acquired. Testimonials to the efficacy of a given medicine were noted in many cases. Lenoir often returned years later to add notes to a given entry. This updating furnished proof of his ongoing interest in the healing skills and his continued use of this lively little volume. This study has used primarily the pre-1820 segments of the Lenoir manuscript.

Lenoir's final receipt, entered just three months before his death, demonstrated very poignantly the personal nature of his commonplace book. In February 1839 he wrote, "Cure for a pain in the Stomack (such as afflicts me) by Dr. Otis Mills Take 2 or 3 pills of Assafidity twice a day, or once a day after Supper and mentioned taking Allaways also. . . . David Campbell says he had had a pain in his stomack somewhat like mine and cured it by drinking very salt water a Teacup at a time."

Joshua Gordon Book of Incantations and Witchcraft (Gn), 1784, Piedmont
South Carolina (York County)

This little memorandum intersperses cures for spelled animals and objects with charms and remedies for human ills and witchcraft. The existence of such a volume is interesting, for this type of folk wisdom seemed to have been typically passed along in secret and only to chosen disciples.

Eliza Lucas Pinckney Household Book (Pk), 1756–,
South Carolina lowcountry

Eliza Pinckney was certainly not a typical eighteenth-century woman. Much of her life was devoted to managing plantations and conducting agricultural experiments, the most famous being her successful indigo culture. This well-educated, innovative, and accomplished woman found time to collect useful recipes for food and medicines. At age thirty-four she began this simple commonplace book, which she titled, "Rece. Book. No: 2 Eliza Pinckney. 1756." Between 1753 and 1758 Eliza, her husband, Charles, and their three children lived in England. Fourteen years later, their daughter, Harriott, then age twenty-

Hampton Plantation, home of Daniel and Harriot Pinckney Horry circa 1750, portico added by 1791. Eliza Lucas Pinckney spent much time with her daughter, Harriot, at Hampton, located on a tributary of the Santee River in the South Carolina Low Country.
Courtesy South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

two, copied many of these recipes into a book of her own two years after marrying Daniel Horry.

Both mother and daughter were knowledgeable and industrious in their roles as health-care providers. In 1768 Eliza wrote a letter to Daniel in which she proudly related that her daughter "has people out gathering simples, different kinds of snake-roots and pink roots and is distiling herbs and flowers." [1]

Harriott Pinckney Horry Household Book (Hr), 1770–,
South Carolina lowcountry

The cookery receipts from the Harriott Horry manuscript have been published as *A Colonial Plantation Cookbook*.[2] When this manuscript volume, simply titled "Harriott Horry, 1770," is turned over and read from back to front it becomes the domestic medical guide included in this study, with eighty-seven medical receipts. Nineteen of the original twenty-six receipts were taken from Harriott's mother, Eliza Lucas Pinckney. The dynamic nature of this family's health-care tradition is evidenced in changes and additions made to the original recipes. Entries to this commonplace book were apparently made throughout Horry's life.

At age thirty-seven, following her husband's death from a fever, Harriott and her mother assumed full responsibility for managing the family plantations. An

important duty for any plantation mistress was overseeing the health of family and servants, and these two women obviously took that responsibility seriously. Their cures followed the mainstream of current medical tradition with a few curious meanderings. Many of the receipts were quite up to date, while others lagged behind current practice. For example, Horry suggests frying earthworms so that the resulting oil might be administered to soothe weak feet or ankles, a remedy that was already considered old-fashioned at that time.

Anne Cameron Household Book (Cm), 1816–,
Piedmont North Carolina (Orange County)

The title delightfully detailed this volume's provenance: "A Friend to the Memory, Recipes, October the 15th, 1816, Mrs. R. Cameron, Fairntosh, Orange Co. No. Carolina." Cookery and remedy receipts were interspersed with other household instructions. Three separate household books seem to have been combined in this volume. Two segments, one dated 1834 and another undated, were inserted in the 1816 memorandum. Only the 1816 portion enters into this study. Loose papers in the Cameron collection contain cures of special interest as well, although most were undated.

Anne Cameron's medical receipts combined dooryard remedies and kitchen physic with the world of exotic ingredients readily available to her through her family's stores. During this period the Camerons, merchants and landowners, were well on their way toward becoming one of North Carolina's most prosperous and influential families.

Dorothea Christina Schmidt Cookery and Medical Receipt Book (Sm),
circa 1772, Germany and Eastern Georgia (Liberty County)

Oral family tradition attributes this volume to Schmidt, who immigrated with her husband from Stuttgart, Germany, to Liberty County, Georgia, in 1790. This attribution seems puzzling in light of the 1772 date on a cookery recipe written in English toward the end of the commonplace book. At least two handwriting changes occurred within this collection, along with a language change. While many of the cookery receipts were written in German, most of the cures and other household notes are in English.

Medical and cookery receipts are intermingled with bits of household information. Dyes, planting directions, and drawings done with the aid of a compass (perhaps quilting designs) were recorded. These contents give strong indication of female authorship.

Sources of the remedies were not noted in this volume. Interrelationships with other period medical receipts are easily shown, although the exact sources are not apparent. Several entries resemble receipts in the Horry manuscript. Some of the Schmidt cures utilized purchased chemical ingredients, while others relied on dooryard herbs and kitchen physic.

The Schmidts' daughter married Egilius Henry Alexander, a connection that resulted in the receipt book coming to North Carolina.

Herbal and Household Book (PD), 1738, 1778–85,
South Carolina lowcountry

This manuscript may have been two separate volumes rather than one. The two were related, however, for they are cross-referenced. The second segment is loose from the binding and is simply inserted inside the cover. There seem to have been two or more authors of this commonplace book of Charleston provenance, as evidenced from a single-page entry dated "1738, Charles Town, South Carolina" sewn inside the first volume. The compiler obviously had access to a medical library, because notes taken from the herbals of John Gerard, Culpeper, John Parkinson and William Salmon appear in the first half of the book, along with entries credited to Dr. William Withering, Dr. Richard Mead, Dr. Hill, and others. These notes, carefully and purposefully selected from a variety of sources, were organized into a unique and personal herbal. The original author, whether male or female, was certainly a serious student of herbal medicine.

The second volume appears to be a woman's household book assembled between 1778 and 1785. Perhaps the compiler had inherited the herbal volume and expanded it to suit her needs and interests. Many of the receipts in the second half were acquired from women, although this fact alone does not lead to the conclusion that the compiler was female. In the field of domestic remedies, female advice seemed to have been thoroughly respected by men as well as women. Both the Lenoir and John Thompson manuscripts included cures credited to women. Conversely, the nonmedical contents of this manuscript strongly suggest a woman author. Cures were intermingled with cookery receipts and household hints, subjects less likely to have been included in a man's notes.

Commonplace Book (ms 752) (SC), circa 1806–16,
South Carolina lowcountry

A lively glimpse into household and plantation management emerges from the pages of this volume. The individual(s) compiling these notes had interests in several outlying plantations on Edisto, Bulls, and Chapman's Islands. Although most of the entries in this volume might apply to either a man's or woman's concerns, the presence of cookery receipts suggests female authorship. There may have been more than one contributor, judging from variations in handwriting and organizational style.

This manuscript was repository for an intriguing jumble of medical receipts, instruction for dyes and cookery, livestock and gardening notes, and financial records, with newspaper clippings pasted over older accounts. Records of supplies (cloth, blankets, hoes, and cotton and corn allowances) distributed to slaves

are quite interesting. Possible methods for preventing a goat from jumping and for "a Fence breaking Cow" were later marked "failed."

Archibald Maclaine Commonplace Book (Mc), 1775–1800,
eastern North Carolina (Cape Fear region)

This commonplace book appears to have been handed down from father to son in Ireland. Beginning with the voluminous notes of the elder Archibald Maclaine, this book was continued by the son. Medical notes from the later portions of the volume were considered for this study.

Archibald Maclaine (the son) was born in Ireland in 1728, moved to the Cape Fear region of North Carolina at age twenty-four, and made a name for himself as a state leader before his death in 1790. The eclectic entries in his personal commonplace book reveal private interests and concerns. The epitome of a gentleman scholar's commonplace book, this volume contains sermons, lists of trade goods, apple varieties, earth science facts, astronomy, weather, and *Society Rules* and *Mrs. Hinlock's Gardiner's Kalender* in addition to medical notes.

Articles on scurvy and proper diet are included among medical recommendations. A lengthy entry details Joanna Stephens's 1739 discovery for "ye cure of ye Stone & Gravel." Several of Maclaine's receipts are reminiscent of an older polypharmaceutical approach to healing that involves complicated combinations of herbs rather than simples. The medical section concludes with notes from a 1772 *Gentleman's Magazine* article following receipts credited to the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* of 1768 and to the famous Dr. Mead.

Frederic William Marshall Commonplace Book (Ml), circa 1764–75,
Pennsylvania and piedmont North Carolina

As director of economic affairs for the North Carolina Moravian community, Marshall traveled and maintained close contact with Pennsylvania and Europe. Among memoranda on business concerns, house construction, and personal accounts in this commonplace book Marshall recorded receipts for medicines, foods, and other practical matters such as a method for waterproofing linen. His notebook was written in English with some entries copied from periodicals and others attributed to individuals. Marshall's collection of cures reflected his wide base of experiences. Personal medical knowledge and practices were likely to have been accumulated throughout his childhood in Germany, young-adult years in England, and thirty-four years (1768–1802) in North Carolina.

The correlation between Marshall's collection of receipts and his personal medical problems is striking. Included were remedies for chilblains, dropsy, colic, stone and gravel, fever and ague, and deafness. He is known to have suffered from frostbite (chilblains) on at least one occasion and to have worried about his increasing loss of hearing as he aged. During the last few years of his life he experienced increasingly frequent and severe chest pains, a problem that could

well have been accompanied by a dropsy (retention of fluids). His family would have had recurring need for general colic and fever medicines, and it was certainly reasonable to have a remedy in reserve for kidney problems.

Jacob Blount Pocket Memorandum (Bl), 1764–67,
Eastern North Carolina

This manuscript includes several intriguing cures among a broad range of personal records and notes. This source is close to the Maclaine manuscript in time (mid-eighteenth century) and place (eastern North Carolina), but the contents of the two books are worlds apart. Blount's notes were practical and basic, unlike Maclaine's scholarly writings.

John Thompson Commonplace Book (Tm), 1803–11,
Central Tennessee (Davidson County)

In addition to recording seventy-eight medical recipes, Thompson kept a diary of a trip to New Orleans, various financial accounts, and such fascinating miscellany as instructions on dressing deer skins, trapping beaver, and playing the game Thirty-one. A description of the marriage ceremony and of an 1811 earthquake round out this curious assortment of personal memoranda.

Wesley's *Primitive Physick* was Thompson's primary sourcebook. Other receipts extracted from published medical guides were attributed to Dr. B. Franklin, Dr. Samuel Tissot, Dr. Henry Wilkins, and Dr. Buchan. Cures credited to various others including "a Frenchman" and "an African Negroe" may have come from books or periodicals or directly from the individuals. Unfortunately, Thompson did not cite sources of several of the more unusual recipes in the manuscript.

Limitations of the Manuscript Sources

The selection of cures for a personal commonplace book was a function of individual needs, available materials, and whim. It is quite predictable that a dozen people consulting the same half dozen reference books and drawing on experience and advice from disassociated sets of friends and acquaintances would compile very different collections of cures. It is reasonable to expect that remedies for complaints of special concern to the individual practitioner might have been favored.

Keeping in mind the limitations of these sources, we know only that these are medical receipts that someone considered interesting and potentially useful. There is seldom any assurance that these remedies were ever tried by the manuscript authors, and it is safe to assume that additional cures were employed. The simplest and most common remedies were undoubtedly shared by word of mouth. For example, lard-and-sulfur ointment for the itch or a blackberry preparation to cure diarrhea were too well known to be often recorded. Such common knowledge was not considered necessary to note in a memorandum.

Supplementary Sources

All of the sources included in this work are southern or can be shown to relate to southern culture. Supplementing the thirteen volumes described above are bits of medical advice that were uncovered in numerous eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century letters, journals, and inventories, both manuscript and published.

The Records of the Moravians in North Carolina, edited by Adelaide L. Fries, are rich in references to health, disease, and domestic medical practices not only among Moravians but also among their neighbors and commercial contacts in the Carolinas and Virginia. Volume 2 includes the valuable 1764 botanical inventory of both wild and cultivated plants by Moravian surveyor Christian Gottlieb Reuter. The published journals of William Byrd (Virginia and North Carolina), John Lawson (South and North Carolina), Peter Kalm (Pennsylvania and New Jersey, among others) and the reminiscences of Joseph Doddridge (Virginia and Pennsylvania) and James Potter Collins (South Carolina and Georgia) yielded important pieces of the medical and botanical puzzle as well.

Oral traditions undoubtedly contributed a major portion of medical knowledge, although written medical advice was also available to common people. A proliferation of domestic medical guides were published from the mid-eighteenth century through the nineteenth century. Publications, European and American, available to southern domestic practitioners were consulted. Most material woven through this study originated during the second half of the eighteenth century. In addition, seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century books and manuscripts speak of ancient folk medical practices still in use between 1750 and 1820, while continuing traditions are reflected in selected sources from the opening years of the nineteenth century.

Two of the most popular domestic medical guides were William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* and John Wesley's *Primitive Physick*. The Allen and Thompson manuscript authors were especially dependent on advice from Wesley. Long passages from Buchan were included in the Allen book as well. Also apparent among the thirteen personal manuscripts are elements from John Quincy's *English Dispensatory*, the *Edinburgh New Dispensatory*, Benjamin Smith Barton's and William Cullen's materia medicas, and Culpeper's herbal, among other popular works.

A variety of broader works included sections on cures. Eliza Smith's *The Compleat Housewife* and George Fisher's *The Instructor; or, The Young Man's Best Companion* are typical popular volumes known to have been available to backcountry inhabitants. Medical advice was drawn from almanacs and newspapers as well. Although articles were generally based on the foremost medical authors of the day, occasional folk remedies were printed in popular periodicals.

Comparison of the southern commonplace books with published medical guides of the period shows these simple little documents to be representative of domestic Euro-American medical practice of the late eighteenth and early nine-

teenth centuries. German, Scottish, Irish, English, and French settlers all seem to have carried or adopted similar medical theories and traditions.

As Dr. David Ramsay of Charleston wrote at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the practice of medicine there was "much that may be called domestic" with many "plain practical authors" to guide the simple home practitioner. The commonplace books compared for this study are sterling examples of the prevalent tradition of every man his own doctor!

Chapter 3—
The Distempers:
Disease in the Eighteenth Century

"Our Country is unhappily subject to several very sharp Distempers."
John Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor*

Newcomers to the backcountry settlements of America in the mid-eighteenth century, whether travelers or settlers, found themselves faced with the uncertainties of procuring basic shelter and food. Self-sufficiency was essential. Health was of constant concern, because disability due to disease or accident would extinguish a person's prospects in this demanding life on the frontier. There was little medical help nearby, and few medicines were available. In fact, companions or neighbors were sometimes unable or even unwilling to expend valuable time, energy, and resources to lend assistance. How would one cope, under eighteenth-century conditions, if seized with such acute diseases as "a violent bilious fever," "a grievous Pain in the Bowels," "a putrid sore throat," or a chronic condition resulting from a "gross & flegmatic constitution"? [1]

Medicine was more art than science. The dawn of germ theory was still decades away. Diagnosis was often difficult, if not impossible, as the symptoms of a given disease can vary radically among different cases. Successive stages of a disorder were likely to be considered separate diseases. In general, symptoms were treated rather than underlying causes: symptoms were apparent, while causes were frequently shrouded in mystery.

"A Violent Bilious Fever"

That "violent bilious fever" was likely to have been yellow fever, typhus, or perhaps a severe case of one of the usual intermitting fevers and agues, malaria or influenza. Treatment for a stubborn fever customarily included bleeding, blistering, sweating, vomiting, and purging. Herbs—wild, cultivated, and exotic—were employed in the attack against the fever.

Newcomers to the southern colonies were particularly prone to attacks of malaria, a lingering illness that was considered an unavoidable adjustment necessary to settlement in this new country. A traveler in 1784 reported that he found himself "seized with a most severe sickness, here called a Seasoning. It was a violent bilious fever."[2]

Two lively letters written by early southern colonists describe their experiences with the seasoning. From the Rappahannock River in Virginia news came: "I have had not my halth very well in ys country as yet but however I hve it much beter than I had it last year only I am now and then trobled wth ye fever & ague wch is a very violent distemper here. This place is only good for doctors & ministers who have very good encouraget here." North Carolina governor William Tryon, in a forty-four-page 1765 letter to his uncle in England, told of "inconveniences I am told every newcomer must experience in this Colony they term it a seasoning. Surely it has a little too much of the Kian [cayenne] Pepper in it." [3]

One of the appeals of the backcountry was a more healthful climate. Prosperous lowcountry folk moved to higher elevations during the fever season in hopes of escaping the illness. There was indeed less malaria in the inland areas; however, the fever was prevalent enough to have been considered a major threat to health even in the back settlements.

The *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* report that most members of the community "suffered from the prevailing fever, which began in July" of 1764. This pattern can be traced through many years. "In August, September, and October, [1770,] many of our members were ill with fever . . . and sometimes it was difficult to properly care for them and keep the work going in house and on farm." And ten years later, the seasonal rise in attacks of the fevers was met with resignation and the comment, "Probably the coming of fall weather has been at least partly the cause." The "obstinate intermittents" were counted "the chief and most prevailing endemial diseases throughout this country." Repeated attacks of malaria undermined general health.[4]

A bilious fever might have been typhoid or other gastrointestinal disorder accompanied by a fever. The general class of illnesses referred to as stomach viruses in the twentieth century certainly fit into the bilious category as well.

"A Grievous Pain in the Bowels"

Gastrointestinal disorders prevailed in varying degrees, from a touch of windiness to serious dysentery. An amazing assortment of remedies for colic (stomachache) and flux (diarrhea or other flow of fluids from the body) appear in period sources. Recommended treatment for intestinal flux commonly involved purges and emetics. As might be expected, the more tormenting stomachache required a more drastic physic (medicine or medical treatment or, more specifically, a cathartic medicine). A purge (cathartic) of bear oil and peach leaves along with a tobacco smoke "glister" (clyster, or enema) formed one attack against such a grievous torment.[5]

"Putrid Sore Throat" and Assorted Other Epidemics

Another dreaded recurring malady, putrid sore throat, was treated with the whole arsenal of eighteenth-century medical weapons. Diphtheria and scarlet fever numbered among the more threatening throat complaints. Serious sore

throat was often termed *quinsy*. Related maladies included colds, pleurisies, and consumption (pulmonary tuberculosis and other wasting illnesses and persistent coughs). Among children, whooping cough was a serious disease. Other dangerous epidemic illnesses such as measles and smallpox claimed scores of lives.

Especially feared were periodic epidemics of smallpox. Much was written during this period on supposed causes and cures for this disease. The solution came along during the final years of the century as vaccination with cowpox became accepted and widely practiced. Almanacs played a large part in popularizing this new preventive measure. Benjamin Franklin was one of the early crusaders for vaccination of the general populace. Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* and other periodicals were distributed from Pennsylvania down the Great Wagon Road; additional almanacs were carried north from Charleston into the backcountry. [6]

"A Gross & Flegmatic Constitution"

An individual's general state of health and resistance to disease, or constitution, was recognized as important. Many ailments were attributed to a generally weakened constitution, and those persons with a "gross & flegmatic constitution" were thought likely to be afflicted with persistent disorders such as rheumatism, kidney stones, dropsy, piles or hemorrhoids, venereal diseases, deafness and earache, eye problems, cancer, scurvy, worms, and menstrual complaints. A survey of remedies in personal medical notes confirmed that these chronic complaints were of special concern to eighteenth-century folk. As expected, fevers, fluxes, and throat and chest complaints were high on the list as well. Commonplace books included doses for all of the above along with instructions for home manufacture of salves, tonics, pills, poultices, tooth cleaners, eye waters, and clysters.

Accident and Injury

Eighteenth-century rural life was filled with peril. The essential tasks of felling trees and raising buildings often resulted in tragic injuries. Open fires in homes, poisonous reptiles and insects in surrounding woods and fields, and travel by foot or horseback through untracked wilderness added danger to everyday pursuits. Completion of a treacherous task or journey called for thanksgiving.

The wonderfully detailed *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* give a feel for the uncertainty of life in the wilderness. "A day laborer . . . was caught under a falling tree, and badly hurt." He was slow to recover, although he was given the best care of the day as they "bled him, and gave him medicine." "That the large Gemein Houses in Salem and Bethania were erected without accident [filled the townspeople] with gratitude." On the contrary, a Moravian "who was shingling [a] new house, fell from the second story and dislocated his leg; [the surgeon] set it without great pain, and then bled him. It was a great mercy that he

was not worse injured." Another house "was raised . . . and without accident, thank God." "One Brother had a narrow escape when horned by a cow." "We were saved from a threatening fire." "And although most of our Brethren and Sisters suffered from the prevailing fever . . . still our Father gave us help and counsel." The North Carolina Moravians also gave "special thanks for the protection of all our Brethren on their journeys to and from Charleston with wagons and goods." [7]

In another near-tragic accident in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia a man on horseback fell down a bank. He was reported to have soon recovered after being bled and given "Volatile drops." Well-prepared travelers packed a few basic remedies for just such emergencies. Venturing into the wilderness for the purpose of surveying and exploring, Virginian William Byrd and his companions took along Peruvian bark for fevers and rhubarb for fluxes while "not forgetting 3 Kinds of Rattle-Snake Root made into Doses in case of Need."[8]

A preoccupation with lurking danger from the bites of snakes, spiders, and rabid animals was obvious in many journals and letters. Hopeful treatments for dog bites were regularly published in newspapers, almanacs, and medical guides, and home practitioners' commonplace books ordinarily included at least one remedy for poisons. Various kinds of animal fats and a remarkable assortment of herbs, each considered a snakeroot, constituted the bulk of recommended eighteenth-century cures.

Faith and Medicine

Although early southerners were beset by dangers from venomous animals, from crippling accident, and from debilitating disease, many clung to the belief that help was at hand. A strong tradition proclaimed that each local distemper was curable with a remedy furnished by nature. Medical practitioners need only search their own dooryards for the appropriate herbs, animal simples, or minerals. Such domestic remedies were thought sufficient for those "who make a right Use of God's Blessings."[9]

Contrary to this advice, however, most home practitioners seem to have felt that God's blessings (the local herbs) should be supplemented with more exotic ingredients. Vegetable, animal, and chemical medicines from tropical America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia were sought and used. Part 2 compares the specific remedies recorded by southerners in anticipation of possible need for use against the common cold, headache, upset stomach, or the itch as well as the variety of "very sharp Distempers" incident to the South.

PART 2—
THE REMEDIES

Chapter 4—
General Therapies

Plain practical author Thomas Ewell, writing in 1817, advised that diseases might be prevented and cured by "Cold and heat, in water and in air, bleeding, rest, exercise, mechanical irritation of the skin, an oiled feather to excite vomiting, and glysters to excite purging." These remedies figured prominently among general therapies practiced throughout the period. [1]

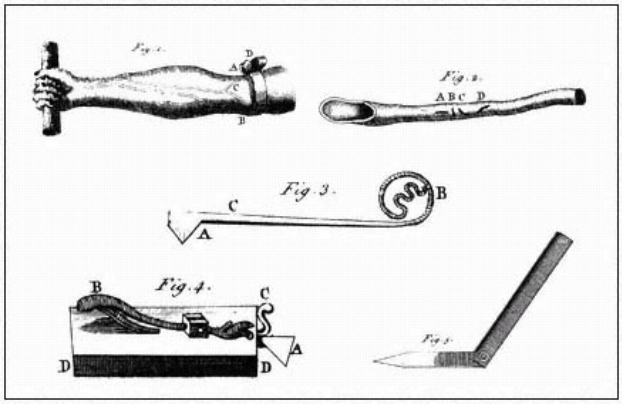
Bleed, Sweat, Blister, Purge, Vomit

The depletion techniques of bloodletting, applying a blistering compound, inducing sweating, and/or administering purgative or emetic drugs often formed the first line of defense against disease. Such measures were an integral part of mainstream medical practice during the eighteenth century, used by both home practitioners and physicians.

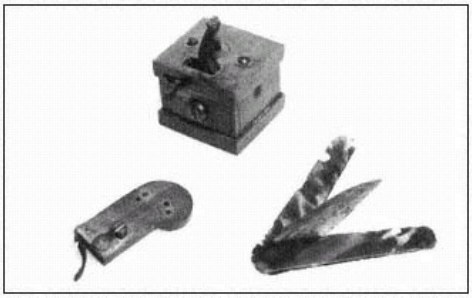
By the turn of the century these so-called heroic practices were being carried to extreme. Dr. David Ramsay stated, "The old remedies, bleeding, blistering, mercury, opium, bark and wine, have been carried to a much greater extent than formerly, and applied to diseases for which they were seldom, if ever, prescribed fifty years ago." He theorized that since 1792 diseases had become "more inflammatory than before that period, and require[d] freer evacuations and more energetic prescriptions." Techniques for cleansing and balancing the body's humors (fluids) were tried singly or in combination.[2]

An aggressive treatment was recorded by a famous Methodist, Francis Asbury, during his 1780 annual preaching circuit. When "seized with a putrid sore throat [Asbury] took physic [a purgative medicine], and applied two blisters behind the ear; had some blood taken from the arm, and some from the tongue." He reported that "it pleased kind Providence to relieve me sooner than expected." Asbury's journals show that he repeatedly resorted to such measures in the face of recurring illness.[3]

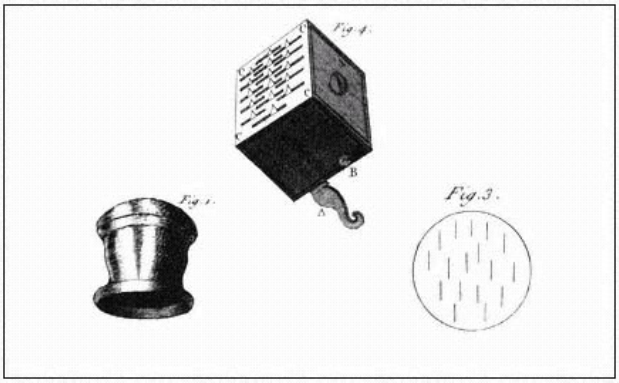
A man suffering from a "severe fever" in February 1812 underwent the following series of treatments under the direction of two doctors in Bertie County, North Carolina: "a tremendous blister was applied between the shoulders Cataplasms to his feet . . . medicine given to open his pores & bowels . . . wine whey & other more stimulating drinks . . . he had got into a perspiration his pulse amended." Two days later the outlook was optimistic: "I had the pleasure to find



Phlebotomy (Bloodletting)
Fig. 1 "Represents an Arm in which a Vein is to be opened."
Fig. 2 "Represents the several Forms of incising a Vein with the Lancet."
Fig. 3 "Exhibits the antient German Phlebotomus or Fleam for opening a Vein. . . . The Handle to be held in one Hand while the Part C is to be struck by a Fillip of the Finger of the other Hand so as to drive the Point A into the Vein."
Fig. 4 "Is a Spring-Fleam, now in Use with some."
Fig. 5 "Represents the French Phlebotomus or Lancet, bent so as to form an obtuse Angle, as it should be, for the more convenient holding it in Bleeding."
From Laurence Heister, *A General System of Surgery in Three Parts* (London, 1757).
Courtesy Health Sciences Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



Phlebotomy Implements. Scarificator, Lancet, and
Spring Lancet (clockwise from top).
Courtesy Health Sciences Library, University
of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



Scarification
Fig. 1 "Represents the Cupping-glass used at present in Germany, and elsewhere, for dry Cupping, or for extracting Blood after Scarification."
Fig. 3 "Represents the Order or Position of the little Incisions made in the skin by the Cupper that they may all be cleanly covered by the Cupping-glass."
Fig. 4 "Exhibits the modern cubical Scarificator."
From Laurence Heister, *A General System of Surgery in Three Parts* (London, 1757). Courtesy Health Sciences Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

him returned to his senses for the first time in 5 days." However, a subsequent letter reported the man's death. [4]

"Bleeding is good"

Many of the domestic receipts discussed in this volume call for at least one of these depletion techniques to adjust the body's fluids. Domestic practitioners generally tended to be less aggressive than physicians, but the humoral theory remained a strong influence on both.

"Bleeding is good" summed up popular belief in the need for adjusting the balance of the body's fluids to restore or maintain health. Early Americans were familiar with the practice of bloodletting (phlebotomy or venesection) to counteract a wide array of ailments. Surviving accounts from southern settlements document phlebotomy for relieving pleurisy, sore throat, chest pains, injuries (to head, chest, side, leg), fevers, broken bones, diarrhea, weeping eye, fainting, vertigo, spider bite, nosebleed, and more. Some practitioners considered examination of the blood to aid in diagnosis, as in the case of a piedmont Carolinian who "was bled and from the condition of his blood it could be inferred that he had taken cold." Even for those in good health, bloodletting was considered a general restorative and preventive measure.[5]

Phlebotomy was employed as a preventive, especially in springtime. "As a matter of precaution" in early spring of 1761 a North Carolina Moravian bled most members of the community, a seasonal ritual repeated in many years according to the Moravian records. Such service was performed by the doctor or by men and women trained by an experienced bleeder. When in 1758 the doctor was to be absent from the Wachovia settlements, he took the precaution of teaching "two of the Brethren how to let blood" and for good measure gave them "a little medical instruction."[6]

Evidently not every community included a person knowledgeable of the art of venesection. On the Virginia frontier, Joseph Doddridge bemoaned the fact that "in many cases a bleeder was not to be had." When his mother suffered a wound that although treated with poultices resulted in a fatal infection, Doddridge considered that injury "might have been cured by two or three bleedings."[7]

Even when a doctor was available, he was not necessarily the first called. In tidewater Virginia a Scottish minister first "sent for Mrs. Birwel and Mrs. Edmundson to Bleed [the patient] but could not, sent for Dr. Roy who bled her at the 3rd Tryal." Piedmont Carolinian William Alexander noted in his travel memorandum while in Pennsylvania on family business, "bleed aunt Sarah and her 2 children."[8]

Blood was generally let through an incision made by a sharp instrument designed specifically for that purpose: "In general the best method is by lancet." Scarification and cupping were employed when "judged proper to evacuate blood directly from the small vessels of the part affected, instead of opening any of the

larger arteries or veins." In scarification, several small cuts were made with lancet or other instrument. Suction was generally applied with a warmed cup or a cupping horn. [9]

Tools for each of these procedures were available to the common practitioner, even in the back settlements. Lancets and fleams were regularly listed in newspaper advertisements, store ledgers, and personal inventories. For example, dozens of lancets were sold through a store at Little River, North Carolina. A 1772 inventory listed two dozen lancets with cases and two dozen horse fleams, indicating that personal bloodletting instruments may have differed from those used for livestock. Did less affluent or more practical folk use the same instrument for all phlebotomies? If the same medical receipts were employed for horse and child, little imagination is required to suspect that tools might have served the dual purpose. A knife would also have served the need.[10]

A warmed glass or cup was employed to suction a wound. An alternative cupping device was the cupping horn, a horn scraped thin so that blood inside would be visible. The small end of the cupping horn had a hole, and as air was sucked from the small opening to create a partial vacuum, the hole was plugged with a bit of wax inserted with the tongue and teeth.[11]

Prominent medical author William Buchan stressed the importance of bleeding but believed the skill was best learned through example. "No operation of surgery is so frequently necessary as bleeding; it ought therefore to be very generally understood. But though practiced by Midwives, Gardeners, Blacksmiths, &c. we have reason to believe that very few know when it is proper. . . . We shall not spend time in describing the manner of performing this operation. That will be better learned by example than precept . . . seeing it once performed by an expert hand." While encouraging people to gain the skill, Buchan criticized certain practices of the period. He advised against the use of leeches, and leeches were not mentioned in any of the personal manuscripts studied.[12]

Detailed instructions for letting blood were available in other popular home medical guides and even in the 1771 *Encyclopedia Britannica*. A ligature (linen band) was tied around a limb or the neck, depending upon the suitable site for the surgery (commonly the arm, foot, tongue, temple, forehead, or throat). The incision was recommended to be twice the thickness of a knife blade. After the proper quantity of blood had flowed, the opening was gently pressed closed with two fingers and a compress and bandage were finally applied.[13]

Blood was let from whatever part of the body seemed appropriate. For a sore throat, blood was likely to be let from tongue or jugular vein. In a fit of the fever an upcountry South Carolinian was bled "freely in the feet in order to bring on a shaking ague." Buchan's volume warned against the "common notion that bleeding in the feet draws the humour downwards, and consequently cures diseases of the head. . . . we have already observed that . . . the blood ought to be drawn as near the part as possible."[14]

Taking eight to ten ounces of blood was standard for diseases affecting the

entire body. Smaller quantities were let in localized afflictions. Letting two or three ounces every third day was accepted therapy for consumption. If the patient did not improve with one bleeding, further phlebotomies were likely to be performed. In the case of a man of Salem, North Carolina, who was ill with diarrhea and cramps, "After bleeding him the second time he improved." Judging by Tennent's recommendation letting of eight ounces for a flux, this patient may have parted with a pint of blood. [15]

Excessive venesection was common, especially by medical professionals. A 1799 entry in William Lenoir's commonplace book noted, "Colo. Alexr. Martin says the Medl. Society have agreed that all kinds of Fefers are of a family and that much Bleeding is good for any kind of fever perticularly the Yellow fever; many having tried Excessive bleeding with Success—vizt. often bleeding untill there is but little Blood remains in the body." The boasted success from this practice seems unlikely.

The well-known saga of George Washington's last illness demonstrates the failure to cure by extreme phlebotomy. He sought treatment for "an inflammatory affection of the upper part of the wind-pipe" from the best doctors available. "The necessity of blood-letting suggesting itself to the General, he procurred a bleeder in the neighborhood, who took from his arm . . . 12 or 14 ounces of blood." The following day a physician was summoned who employed two additional copious bleedings, along with blisters and a purgative dose of calomel. Two consulting physicians were called in and another thirty-two ounces of blood were drawn. As the newspaper announcement of Washington's death reported, "Every medical assistance was offered, but without the desired effect."[16]

Washington's course of treatment was not without criticism. "They drew from a man in the sixty-ninth year of his age, the enormous quantity of 82 ounces, or above two quarts and a half of blood in about thirteen hours. [T]he physicians soon observed . . . that he expired without a struggle! The excessive bleeding had left him no strength to struggle!" The author suggested, "They ought to have attacked the disease as near to its seat as possible: the vein under the tongue might have been opened. . . . One ounce of blood drawn in this way would relieve more than a quart drawn from the arm." It is interesting that the bloodletting itself was not questioned as much as the details of its execution. The practice was thoroughly embraced by late-eighteenth-century Americans. In addition, Washington's treatments with purgatives, emetics, and blisters were not questioned.[17]

"Very Much Indisposed" . . . Try a Purge

Purging was considered a nearly universal cure. *Physic* or *physick* might have referred specifically to a laxative dose or more generally to any medicine or medical practice. One Tennessean found himself "Very much indisposed, both in body and mind. For remedy, applied the free use of Cathartics and urged . . . a disunion of the Nuptial contract. The former proved salutary; but the latter was

not agreed to. Therefore the dilemma continued to exist." Although purging could not cure every problem, the bowels were considered the seat of many complaints. Cathartic (purgative, laxative) medicines were myriad. [18]

Dooryard purgatives were often sought. When Moravian travelers were stricken by a fever with vomiting, "they unquestionably needed a purge." Since they had none with them, they "were told of a root, which the Saviour blessed to our use." That root may have been Indian physic or mayapple.[19]

In addition to such native remedies, much use was made of imported medicines. Preparations popular in Europe were widely available for purchase in America as well, many of them containing chemical ingredients or exotic botanicals. Chemical purgatives listed in southern sources included Glauber's salts, cream of tartar, calomel, sulfur, and magnesia. Of plant derivatives, rhubarb appears to have been especially popular. Hiera-picra (a combination of aloes and canella), jalap, manna, senna, and castor oil found wide use. To make castor oil more pleasant, it was mixed with lemon juice; vinegar; rose water, egg yolk, and sugar; egg yolk and peppermint; or warm coffee. Calomel was typically given in honey or molasses, as was sulfur. Rachel Stout Allen's medical memorandum contained a triply potent combination involving multiple purgatives made palatable with honey:

> To Make hunney physick
>
> Take flower of sulphar one ounce} Creame of tarter one ounce} powder of Jallep Quarter of an ounce mix them in Clarified honey to the Consistance of an Electury and take thereof Every morning fasting as much as will ly on the point of a Case knife} to cure Bad Blood.
>
> Al

Similar combinations of sulfur, jalap, and magnesia or of jalap, rhubarb, and cream of tartar were recommended by Harriott Pinckney Horry to furnish "a good Cathartic." Another lowcountry manuscript proposed a "Common purging powder" of jalap and cream of tartar with ginger (PD). When administering calomel, a combination of cathartic medicines was considered necessary. Lenoir noted "that altho Calomel will purge yet it will not work itself off, but ought to be worked off with Salts or some other physic." Although he alluded to attendant dangers, his precautions seem inadequate: "Calomel is chiefly Mercury and ought to be carefully maneged & not let the person that takes it eat or drink anything improper for several days after." Lenoir recorded a calomel purge for one of his horses, noting also the proper human dosage for an adult and for a child.

Allen sought less drastic physic from oil of almonds, elder roots, roses, white walnut bark, figs, and all parts of the peach tree:

> for a gentle purge Take Elder Roots
> peach Blossoms & Rose leaves Stew or
> Boyl them.
>
> Al

The Thompson manuscript suggested an atypical method—use of an alum suppository.

> An infallible purge—
>
> take a piece of allum about 1 1/2 inches long and Scrape it to fit the fundiment and put it up it about one inch in a grown person.
>
> Tm

Simultaneous purging and vomiting were sometimes deemed appropriate in an attempt to restore the body's healthy balance of humors. In 1769 a child taken with the flux was first given hippo (ipecac); he took rhubarb the next day and three days later took physic again. Perhaps he remained unwell, for two months later the child "took a purge of roses." [20]

Horry's home remedy, "Serviceable Family Medicine," served as both laxative and emetic. That solution of salts and tartar emetic in senna tea was to be given "every hour till it operates well." Similarly, her "Tincture of Rhubarb" (rhubarb, ipecac, and fennel seeds infused in brandy) was designed to effect both actions. One school of thought suggested that a "vomit ruffles nature much less than a common purge."[21]

"She Took a Vomit"

"We have had a long spell of sickness. . . . Nancy was confined to her bed near three weeks. . . . She took a vomit and it was working when James Walker was here, which made her look worse, but afterwards she became easier." So wrote James Wilson of Lincoln County, North Carolina, to his brother in May 1789. Vomiting was thought cleansing and beneficial in a wide variety of illnesses.[22]

Two emetics (medicines used to produce vomiting) commonly encountered in domestic medicine were tartar emetic and ipecacuanha. Tartar emetic was composed of potassium tartrate and antimony. Horry's "Sugar Powder For the Fevers" was simply tartar emetic with sugar, while Dorothea Christina Schmidt's "Emetic to be given in the Fever" was similar with saltpeter added.

Tartar emetic dissolved in wine was known as antimonial wine, which was used both as an emetic and in cough medicines. Horry's book contains a simple receipt for that infusion:

> Antimonial Wine for Vomit
>
> Take one Oz. of Glass of Antimony, pound it a little, and put it into a bottle of Madeira Wine; let it infuse three or four days, then Filter it and fill the bottle again with Wine, and so on for seven years. For a grown person give two large Tablespoonfulls every 1/2 hour till it vomits.
>
> Hr

Most collections of cures included at least one receipt for preparing a hippo vomit. Schmidt considered ipecacuanha "a very safe vomit" to be given every half hour until it operated. The discovery of a wild ipecac and other native herbs with emetic properties was heralded. Doddridge reported, "indian physic, or bowman root, a species of epicacuanha was frequently used for a vomit, and sometimes the pocoon or blood root." [23]

"Sweating Was the General Remedy"

"For fevers, sweating was the general remedy," as it was for measles, hydrophobia, rheumatism, and other swellings and pains according to the manuscript sources. Absence of sweating was considered a symptom of illness, as in the case of a Moravian "taken sick with another attack of flux, and a high fever without perspiration." Gentle sweats were suggested as a cure for "Obstructed perspirations (vulgarly called catching cold)."[24]

An intriguing method for inducing perspiration in a fever was recorded in Moore County, North Carolina: "the following applications have been frequently used—8 or 10 Green white oak blocks from 8–10 Inches long or double their Numbers of large Ears of Corn are Boiled as hot as boiling water can make them, and then placed round the Patient in bed at right angles with his body and covered together with blankets to confine the steam. Here the Patient is left Stewing until the whole cools by degrees. . . . This kind of Sweating is Still practiced among the Indians." A more common Indian method employed heated stones rather than corn.[25]

Purification of the body through sweating was a tradition shared by Indians and Euro-Americans, but the Indian practice of concluding a sweat with a plunge into cold water was not common among the settlers. Christian Gottlieb Reuter described a sweat produced through both internal and external means:

> Wild Cress . . . is very good in cases of fever. The Indians, and others, take this plant and Indian Physic and let it stand over night in child Rum. Then they undress the patient, place hot stones under him and pour water over them and make him drink the Rum, and let him sweat until the sweat has something of the odor of the herb. Then they put him to bed, and let him continue to sweat.[26]

Various herbs were employed in both internal and external applications to induce sweating. Doddridge said that in frontier settlements, "Remittent and intermittent fevers were treated with warm drinks, for the purpose of sweating. . . . This was generally performed by means of a strong decoction of Virginia snake root." Reuter, in his 1764 inventory of the Wachovia settlements, specified Virginia snakeroot, white plantain, cress, and Indian physic for sweating. Lenoir recorded in 1806 a recommendation from a Mrs. Eversole that it was "good to Sweat over the herb life-everlasting." This woman was apparently engaged in a

medical practice of sorts, because Lenoir added the note, "I told her I'd pay her pretty well if it cures my negroe boy Sam." [27]

While steam baths and warm draughts acted generally throughout the body, some cases required localized perspiration. Sweating near the site of the affliction was induced through steaming, wrapping, or plastering the area. Mustard is legendary as a warming plaster. A simple form of mustard plaster was included in Schmidt's book of household receipts: "A cure for pains in the limbs-take some mustard wet it with vineger and rub the part affected with the pain with it." The mustard irritated and warmed the skin. The Allen manuscript outlined a more involved method:

> a poltis for palsy to Recall the Blood & Spirits to a weak part Sciatica & ye like & to ye feet in feevers till ye Skin is Red & will be So when prest with ye finger take Light Bred & Musterd Seed Brused Both alike Strong Vinegar Make a poltice when wanted Stronger ad Brused garlic.
>
> Al

The stronger the mustard and the longer its application, the more likely the result would be not only sweating and redness but also blistering of the skin. Mustard's potential for blistering the afflicted portion of the body was indicated by a receipt almost identical to Schmidt's remedy for "pains in the limbs," renamed "Plaster for Drawing Blisters" in a popular mid-nineteenth-century health guide. Excess clear humors were extracted from the body through blistering, diuresis, and salivation as well as through sweating.[28]

"Pain Begets Invention." . . . Send for a Blister

Asbury wrote in his journal, "Pain begets invention. . . . What shall I do? I am my own physician. I sent for two blisters; applied both to my ears" for an inflamed throat. He employed the same remedy for headache.[29]

Numerous complaints were thought mitigated by blistering. Blisters were generally kept open and draining as long as possible. Several sources give insight into popular techniques for raising a blister as well as the variety of cases on which this depletion therapy was used.

Spanish flies and mustard seeds were popular irritants used in blister plasters. Both were included in Buchan's receipt for "Blistering Plaster," while Quincy's *Dispensatory* recommended Spanish fly as the active ingredient.

Spanish fly (cantharides) is a species of beetle named for its abundance in Spain (although it is also available in Italy and southern France, and there is a related American species). The dried insect bodies contain a powerfully irritating poison. The imported cantharides was available through port cities. It is not clear to what extent this medicinal insect might have been collected locally. Just as there was much interest in discovering new and useful plants, early travelers and settlers were alert to beneficial animal products. One visitor to tidewater Virginia

commented of the firefly that some people "fancy them Cantharides," although he did not concur with that incorrect identification. In 1830, when recommending application of a blister to a snakebite, John C. Gunn accurately noted that the Spanish blistering fly was nothing more than "our common potato fly." [30]

The availability of cantharides and knowledge of their use to create blisters was common, even among backcountry folk. The use of Spanish fly by Moravians has been documented in piedmont North Carolina in 1774. On the Georgia frontier in the 1790s, James Potter Collins recounted a desperate situation: "I took the first hard spell of fever, I ever had in my life; true, the measles, small-pox and fever and ague had all fallen to my lot, but a hard attack of billious fever I had never experienced. . . . no doctor to be had except a Dutch quack, who used simples altogether. . . . at length they procured some flies as a last remedy, and applied seven blisters to me."[31]

Horry's receipt "For Blister Plaisters" instructed, "Take Tallow, Beeswax, Fresh Butter and soft Pine Gum and Melt them together." The resulting salve offered a typical base to which an active ingredient such as Spanish fly or mustard might have been added. It was also quite similar to Buchan's "Wax Plaster," recommended as "a proper application after blisters."[32]

Stimulating the Flow: Urine and Saliva

In addition to sweating and blistering, methods for restoring balance of the clear humors were based on regulation of urine or saliva. Diuretic doses were in common usage, as were methods for increasing salivation.

Buchan recommended a diuretic solution of juniper berries, mustard seed, horseradish, and broom ashes in wine, ingredients that also appear in various receipts for dropsy. Similarly, home practitioners embraced Buchan's list of diuretic herbs for kidney problems, including marshmallow roots, parsley, licorice, linseed, and wild carrot seeds.[33]

Salivation was also considered helpful in achieving a balance of clear humors, with a variety of herbs used to stimulate saliva flow. The copious salivation produced by mercurial medicines was considered good therapy, although the dangers from mercury poisoning were acknowledged. In some instances patients were directed to spit and discard the excess fluid. In other cases, swallowing the saliva was thought beneficial.

The Thompson manuscript suggested for "Gravel or Stone—take fasting Spittle for Some week's the Best way is to eat a crust of Bread every morning fasting." John Wesley suggested crusts of bread for kidney stone without explaining the action, although he detailed that one suffering from "coldness in the stomach" should "chew a leaf of carduus every morning, and swallow the spittle," adding that he had tried this remedy. During one of Asbury's recurring attacks of severe headache and fever with inflamed throat, he noted that this disorder was attended "with little or no perspiration." To remedy the situation, he "made use of flaxseed tea, and a very great expectoration followed."[34]

Diet and Exercise

In addition to the prevailing dependence on the depletion practices discussed previously in this chapter, medical literature dwelt heavily on theories of proper diet and exercise, prescribing a healing regimen for each disorder. The Allen manuscript drew from Buchan's advice on foods for allaying urinary complaints.

> avoid Aliments of a windy or heating Nature Salt meats Sour fruits &c. their diet ought chiefly to consist of Such things as tend to promote the Secretion of Urine and to keep the Body open Artichoaks Lettuce parsley purslain turnips Round potatoes Carrots and Redishs May Be Safely Eat Onions Leeks and Cellary are in this Case Reckened Medicinel drinks Whey Butter Milk Milk and Water.
>
> Al

Allen gave just such specific dietary instruction for each disease. A detailed exploration of therapeutic regimen is outside the purpose of this work; however, an overview of those foods considered generally healing and healthful is included here.

Most medical authors agreed with Wesley that "All pickled, or smoked, or salted food, and all high-seasoned, is unwholesome." The difficulty with such advice lay in the fact that fresh foods were unavailable out of season, and therefore the variety of foods was severely limited in winter. Common diet relied heavily on foods preserved by pickling, smoking, and salting. Whether prepared from fresh or preserved ingredients, highly seasoned foods were preferred, and exotic spices were widely available. [35]

Thin soups, bread or gruel, milk or whey, water, and wine were basic invalid foods. One entry from a traveling clergyman's journal summarizes foods appropriate for the sick: "my bowels being much disordered, the water, the milk, and the bread are like physic to me. . . . I got some fowl soup. . . . my bowels continued to be disordered, and had I not procured a little wine, I suppose I should have failed altogether."[36]

Meat broths were considered nutritious and curative. The commonplace books examined during this study often recommended light soups—broths of chicken, veal, mutton, or cow heels. *The Complete Family Directory*, bound with the 1816 edition of Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*, offered three variations of sweetened and spiced calf's-foot broth as well as a recipe for "A Great Restorative," a soup of calves' feet in milk.[37] Calf's-foot jelly receipts were also common among manuscript sources. Chicken soup has remained one of the most celebrated invalid foods through the ages. This chicken broth receipt was recorded in Horry's book as remedy for flux:

> For the Flux
>
> Take a Chicken, draw and flea [flay] it. Take eight sweet Almonds, and twelve Cucumber seeds 12 Mellon do.[ditto] and 18 Gourd seed, pound

these together, put them into ye Belly of the Chicken and Sew it up at Neck and Vent: boil it in four quarts of the softest and cleanest Water for an Hour over a slow fire. Give it luke warm to the Patient as much as he shall find agreeable to take and repeat the same as often as he can conveniently drink it till ye disorder is abated. Fresh Chicken and seeds may be boil'd, if there is occation, till ye cure is completed, tho' it frequently happens that one is sufficient, during the course the Patient must refrain from meats of all sorts and eat Potatoes and such Vegitables as may be used as substitutes for Bread.

Hr

Starchy foods were also considered suitable for invalids—gruel of any available grain (oat, barley, rye, wheat, corn, or rice), bread or hard biscuit with water or milk, or panada. The following method from *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* may have been a little more elegant than the backcountry housewife's basic bread-and-milk dish.

To make Panado

You must take a quart of water in a nice clean sauce-pan, a blade of mace, a large piece of crumb of bread; let it boil two minutes; then take out the bread and bruise it in a bason very fine; mix as much water as will make it as thick as you would have it; the rest pour away, and sweeten it to your palate; put in a piece of butter as big as a walnut; do not put in any wine, it spoils it; you may grate in a little nutmeg. This is hearty and good diet for sick people. [38]

Availability of ingredients and differing tastes dictated the preferred cereal for invalids. In the backcountry settlements a thinned cornmeal mush would have been common food in sickness. From the South Carolina rice-growing region came this receipt for thin rice gruel:

A Drink for a sick Person

A handful of rice a pint of new milk a quarter of a pint of spring Water a blade of Mace put all in a close pot & bake till the rice is tender then strain it.

PD

In addition to thin soups and cereals, patients were ordinarily directed to drink water, wine, whey, or milk along with herbal teas. In some cases the use of strong drink was discouraged, although a variety of medicines were compounded with spirits. The line between food and medicine was seldom clear, and numerous kitchen remedies were highly regarded. Recommendations for a healing diet were paired with strengthening exercises suited to the infirmity.

The majority of early Americans certainly did not lack for exercise. Even

higher-class men and women were typically quite active in the management of their daily affairs, although in some circles a sedentary life was considered an emblem of the upper class. People employed in sedentary occupations (shoemakers, tailors, seamstresses, students, and so forth) were thought particularly prone to health decline through inactivity. Gentle exercise was recommended. "Walking is the best exercise for those who are able to bear it; riding for those who are not. . . . Thus the lungs may be strengthened by loud speaking, or walking up an easy ascent; the digestion and the nerves by riding; the arms and hams by strong rubbing. . . . Those who read and write much, should learn to do it standing." [39]

At times, proper diet and gentle exercise were not sufficient for restoring health. A variety of illnesses were treated with the stimulating effects of hot or cold bathing, mineral waters, and electrical shock.

Electricity

Electricity as a medical tool was quite the rage by the end of the eighteenth century. Medical professionals, whether formally educated or self-taught, were more likely to possess electrical apparatuses than were domestic practitioners. The authors of common home health guides suggested treatment by mild electrical shock or by adjusting the animal electricity.

Electricity was applied to the human body "either in the method of drawing sparks, as it is called, or of giving shocks." Sparks were procured through generation of static electricity by friction or from a charge stored in a Leyden jar, while a steady shock was drawn from a voltaic pile (battery). A variety of devices were developed for this purpose.[40]

By the early nineteenth century the electrical machine seems to have caught the attention of doctor and layperson alike. A Louisburg, North Carolina, doctor wrote excitedly in 1810, "I have, I reckon, one of the first electrical machines on the continent. I cure diseases with it wonderfully—besides that it is a fine source of amusement and instructive philosophy. Will form one day, perhaps, an excellent part of my medical apparatus." Perhaps electrical devices were more common than this man realized, for nine years earlier James Kershaw had noted in his Camden, South Carolina, diary, "got a Tin Conductor for Electrical Machine." Dr. Samuel Vierling's 1817 estate inventory in Salem, North Carolina, listed "electrical machine or electrical apparatus."[41]

In fact, Wesley cited personal knowledge and "a thousand experiments" determining electricity "to be far superior to all other medicines. . . . Certainly it comes the nearest to a universal medicine of any yet known in the world." In his 1791 health guide Wesley listed forty-nine diseases and symptoms that he declared curable by "Electrifying in a proper manner." He avowed to have never "yet known one single instance wherein it has done harm . . . unless the shock be immoderately strong." According to Wesley, the best treatment was "to give fifty, or even a hundred small shocks each time; but let them be so gentle as not terrify the patient in the least."[42]

Broad interest in electricity and its medical benefits paved the way for curious fads. Elisha Perkins, a self-taught physician from Connecticut, gained fame for cures facilitated by his antiseptic of salt and vinegar and his metallic points, or tractors. This simple apparatus consisted of two small metal rods, one gold colored and the other silver colored, with which the infirm portion of the body was to be stroked in a carefully prescribed manner to adjust the animal electricity. According to Perkins's theory, any disordered part contained an excess of an electrical fluid that required draining by means of his invention.

Hall's Wilmington (North Carolina) Gazette proclaimed on February 8, 1798, "Doctor Perkins, inventor of the Metallic Points or Tractors, has taken lodgings for a few days at Dorsey's Hotel, where he will be happy to operate for the relief of the afflicted, to give an opportunity to those who wish it, for the most satisfactory evidence of their efficacy that the nature of the case will admit." The announcement further stated, "He has the Instruments with the necessary instructions for sale." Without a doubt, profit was one incentive in Perkins's practice; in addition, he was apparently motivated to alleviate suffering. During the yellow fever epidemic of 1799, he journeyed to New York with the intention of establishing beyond a doubt the efficacy of his methods. His resulting death from the fever proved the contrary. **43**

When viewed through the early-nineteenth-century understanding of electricity, the use of metal rods to drain off animal magnetism seems rather like the use of a magnet in healing. Both Wesley and Buchan endorsed the application of a magnet to an afflicted tooth. Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* advised that the use of magnets "certainly deserves a trial, as it is attended with no expence, and cannot do any harm."**44**

Electricity was considered beneficial when the pulse was lower than normal but harmful when the pulse ran high. While Samuel Stearns's *American Oracle* warned that "none ought to apply this remedy without the advice of a skilful physician," the author added that "when the body is in a proper condition, diseases may be cured by the electrical fluid, when other remedies fail."**45**

Among diseases to be treated with electricity, palsies and nervous disorders were prominent. On meeting a man who had lost the use of his limbs, Asbury "advised him to use the cold bath, or electricity, either might help him." It is not surprising to find that Asbury's advice echoed that of Wesley, who recommended that sufferers from palsies should be "electrified daily, for three months, from the places wherein the nerves spring, which are brought to the paralytic part." In addition, Wesley suggested cold bathing as particularly curative of "nervous and paralytic disorders."**46**

Medicinal Waters and Bathing

The shock resulting from cold bathing was considered similar to an electrical shock to the human body. One of Wesley's "Plain Easy Rules" of health stated, "Cold bathing is of great advantage to health; it prevents abundance of diseases.

It promotes perspiration, helps the circulation of the blood, and prevents the danger of catching cold." Wesley's list of forty-six disorders requiring cold-water treatment overlapped significantly with his list of ailments that might be cured with electricity. He warned, "Persons of feeble constitution should use [cold bathing] with care, and not remain too long in the bath"; however, he also offered reassurance that cold bathing was "approved by all when used properly." [47]

Healing springs became increasingly popular through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Bathing in the waters, warm or cold, was thought not only curative but also invigorating for those in good health. The popular search for healing springs was rewarded with discovery of both hot and cold sources yielding interesting mineral waters. Waters from the springs were also valued for internal use as healing or restorative potions.

Taking mineral waters, "those impregnated by nature with peculiar qualities," was deemed healthful. Some waters were thought to operate "by strengthening the constitution, some by purging, and others by increasing the discharges of urine, perspiration, or both." According to Archibald Maclaine's commonplace book, "Mineral waters, especially those that are Chalybeat, are of very important use . . . being of great refuge in very potent & obstinate Diseases."[48]

Dr. Thomas Walker, traveling in southwest Virginia in 1749-50, "went to the hot Springs and found Six Invalids there. The Spring Water is very Clear and warmer than new Milk, and there is a spring of cold Water within 20 feet of the warm one." The Virginia spas were widely esteemed. The 1802 Moravian diaries reported travelers "from Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia and from the seacoast of this state, some of them on their way to the warm springs and baths in Virginia."[49]

The importance of healing springs to backcountry Carolinians was illustrated in 1778 when General Griffith Rutherford proposed that two springs with their surrounding lands be declared public property. (The proposal was later rejected.) These medicinal springs were located in the piedmont counties of Rowan and Burke.[50]

Among piedmont Carolina waters of interest, Rockingham Springs developed a faithful following. In 1790 the cold springs had "certain arrangements for the comfort of patients" as well as a capable doctor. Moravians seeking mineral waters traveled the sixty miles from Salem, North Carolina, to Rockingham. At the same time, considerable energy was put into a search for healing springs nearer home. Exploration and testing yielded several promising prospects. Iron and sulfur were confirmed in a spring near Friedland, North Carolina. Such chalybeate (iron-containing) waters were highly esteemed.[51]

To the south, in Lincoln County, North Carolina, Catawba Springs had become a fashionable resort. According to Kershaw's 1794 diary, Catawba Springs was a favored destination for Camden, South Carolina, folk. The springs enjoyed a wide and continuing popularity. During an 1812 visit to Catawba Springs, J. Hooker of Columbia wrote to his brother in Connecticut a wistful description of

his view of the neighboring mountains, which reminded him of their boyhood home. [52]

A lively picture-in all likelihood representative of many spas of that periode—merged from an 1807 description of Rice Creek Springs, located about fifteen miles from Columbia. This spring was described as "considerably resorted to in summer. In a very retired spot in the midst of woods. . . . The water is clear, cool and light, but I don't suppose it has peculiar medicinal virtues. The spring is in the side of a hill. . . . On this brow of this hill are ranged in a curve line the little log houses that people live in, who resort there. They are only one story high & about a dozen in number. There are about 8 families there this summer, besides a number of private boarders at the Boarding house.—The men amuse themselves [by hunting deer or playing cards, not by reading or in conversation]. The living there is very good, and people partake of it, not like invalids, but like the heartiest of men.—Board is a dollar a day there & five dollars a week."[53]

And then there were "those surprising Springs on French Broad famous for curing Rheumatic Complaints." The waters were described as "quite warm otherwise well tasted." But another backcountry inhabitant "tried the Warm Springs, on French broad, and obtained no relief" from a vague complaint considered either hypo (hypochondria) or a spell.[54]

Bathing was performed more for health than for cleansing in early America. Some people enjoyed bathing, while others simply endured it, but many believed a bath to be therapeutic for a variety of ills. These baths were not of the scrubbing-with-soap kind. Exposing oneself to being wet all over was not common practice. Washing the whole body evidently remained a progressive idea in 1817, when Ewell wrote in his *Letters to Ladies,* "The females of the southern states, who frequently bathe during the summer, derive great benefit from the operation. The advantages derived from visiting the water places, unquestionably depend more on the washing of the skin, than on any medicinal qualities in the water."[55]

There were undoubtedly numerous other springs of local importance. The enthusiasm for healing waters was common to many cultures and was certainly not new. Fashionable spas in America flourished during the century preceding the Civil War. In all probability, the relaxing surroundings and the lively social life were the most restorative elements of these resorts. Indeed, some visitors omitted the baths altogether, thoroughly satisfied with simply drinking the waters and enjoying the society.[56]

Therapies were chosen according to a perceived need to adjust the balance of humors—through bleeding, purging, vomiting, or discharging sweat, urine, saliva, or serous fluid. In addition, the general condition of the body was considered. Treatments were chosen to heat or cool, to dry or moisten, to stimulate or calm through diet and exercise, electricity, medicinal waters, bathing, and medication. The medical receipts in the following chapters contain repeated references to these general therapies.

Chapter 5—
Patent Medicines and Famous Nostrums

A body of common knowledge of nostrums (panaceas, quack medicines) existed among eighteenth-century Americans. Quack medicines found a following along with those developed by physicians, botanists, and chemists. Some were secretly formulated and surrounded by mystery. Others were readily accessible in handbooks of domestic medicine and were copied into commonplace books. Several ancient formulas remained in common use. Most popular nostrums were alcohol-based, and many contained opium.

Opium was "very much in the acquaintance of all concern'd in Medicine." The *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* stated that by 1764 a premium was being offered for successful manufacture of opium. The poppy from which opium is made was being cultivated in the Wachovia settlements. Local processing of the seed heads was encouraged:

> The best method of making Turkish Opium is said to be this-When the Poppy seed-pod is almost ripe, but still soft and full of sap, . . . incisions are made . . . drops of milky sap come out, and soon harden. . . . After all the Opium has been gathered it is worked and pounded on a board with a little water, and then it is shaped into cakes or rolls for sale. [1]

Some medical writers were very bold in the use of opium. Others agreed with John Wesley, who considered opium "Far too strong for common men to grapple with," and with John Tennent, who acknowledged the powerful effects of opium, mercury, and Peruvian bark but feared putting "such dangerous Weapons" into unskilled hands. In contrast, William Buchan recommended opium preparations for home use and published simple receipts for both laudanum and paregoric in *Domestic Medicine*.[2]

Typical among period medical guides, John Quincy's *Pharmacopoeia Officinalis* gave ten methods for basic opium preparations. Laudanum was perhaps the most common opium-based medicine, and paregoric was popularly employed as well.[3]

Harriott Horry's method for laudanum produced a simple tincture of opium:

> Laudanum
>
> Take 2 Oz. of Opium, put it into one third of a Pint of Water, let it remain 24 hours shaking it well frequently, then add of Brandy and Madeira Wine of each one third of a pint so that you have a pint liquid including the Water, mix it all together let it stand 2 or 3 weeks then pour it off clear for use. You may then add near a pint of Spirit and water to the grounds and keep it for outward applications.
>
> Hr

The popular dispensatories suggested a wide variety of additives to this basic preparation. William Lenoir's medical memorandum contained this receipt from "Dr. Guy":

> Dr. Guy's Directions to Make Elixir Paregoric—
>
> Opium 1 Dram, Camphor 2 Scruples, Essential Oil of Anis seed 1 dram, Proof Spirits 2 pints—Mix and Digest 10 days.
>
> Ln

Buchan's paregoric contained benzoin rather than camphor and anise seed. He considered this mixture "an agreeable and safe way of administering opium. It eases pain, allays tickling coughs, relieves difficult breathing, and is useful in many disorders of children, particularly the hoopingocough." [4]

Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry appear to have possessed special interest in compounding their own medicines. Both of their personal memoranda included formulas for Turlington's Balsam of Life and Daffy's Elixir in addition to the following cough drops, which were liquid rather than solid.

> Cough Drops
>
> 4 Oz Honey 4 Oz Liquorish sliced 1 Dram Flowers Benjamin 1 Dram Opium 1 Oz Salt of Tartar 2 Scruples Camphire 1/2 Dram Oil of Aniseed.
>
> Infuse these Ingredients in a quart of double rectified Spirit of Wine by the fire for ten or twelve days shaking ye Bottle twice a day: there must be a slit cut in the Cork. The dose for a grown Person is one hundred drops taken in a glass of Water going to Bed. If the patient is not better in two or three times taking the drops, they must take a Purge and then repeat them.
>
> Pk, Hr

Most of these ingredients were imported and had to be purchased. Domestic healers might have chosen to purchase ready-made cough drops. Commercial

medicines were imported from England and were available not only in port cities but also from backcountry merchants. The popular medical guides published formulas for medicines of long-standing repute such as Turlington's Balsam, Daffy's Elixir, and Dover's Powders.

While Dover's Powders was widely available for purchase, this standard remedy was easily compounded at home from opium, ipecacuanha, and either potash or vitriolated tartar (potassium sulfate). A receipt for Dover's and an alternate fever powder were found among undated loose sheets in the Cameron family papers. The 1791 *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* claimed that this powder was "one of the most certain sudorifics" with acclaim in rheumatism and dropsy and other diseases judged to be eased through copious sweating. [5]

Not all popular nostrums contained opium, but most were alcohol based. Turlington's Balsam of Life was founded on a basic tincture combining benzoin (benjamin), aloes, storax, and balsam of tolu or Peru (or both). This famous preparation was invented at least two hundred years before Robert Turlington added his name to the complex eighteenth-century version that captured new popularity. Turlington's original patent specifications induded twenty-six botanicals.[6]

Turlington's concoction was alternately known as Friar's Balsam, Balsamum Traumaticum, and Jesuit's Drops among a variety of other names dating back several centuries. Twentieth-century dispensatories continued to list the simplified version, compound tincture of benzoin. By whatever name, it was considered to be particularly effective when applied to diverse external complaints and internally for respiratory disorders. Although the formulas varied, the angular shape of the bottle was readily recognizable. Emptied bottles were refilled with kindred tinctures, with each practitioner or individual freely employing a modification of the basic receipt. Counterfeit bottles were manufactured, of distinctive form similar to Turlington's original, with subtle differences in shape or lettering.[7]

> To make Turlington's Balsam
>
> 1 Oz Balsam of Peru, 2 Do. best Storax, 3 Do. of Benjamin impregnated with Oil of Almonds, 1/2 Do. Aloes, Sucotrine, 1/2 oz. Flowers of St. John's Wort, 1/2 Do. best Myrrh, 1/2 Oz Frankinsence, 1/2 Do. Angelica Roots, 2 Drachams English Saffron, 1 Pint Spirits Wine.
> Mix all the Materials together let them stand for a fortnight, then add a Qt. of Brandy, let it stand for 3 or 4 mths in the Sun, Shaking it every Day.
>
> Pk, Hr

An early-eighteenth-century manuscript found in King William County, Virginia, also contained this formula (with an added two ounces of calamint) under the heading "To make Mr. Heals Balm." Recommended virtues included almost everything from toothache to smallpox whether taken internally or applied externally. The Pinckney-Horry receipt is almost identical to Hannah Glasse's "genu-

ine Receipt to make Turlington's Balsam" with the addition of saffron. Most published sources offered at least one formula for this cure-all. [8]

Although newspaper advertisements and store inventories indicated wide availability of Daffy's Elixir, domestic preparation was apparently also common. This purgative, popular since the seventeenth century, appeared in eighteenthcentury dispensatories as senna tincture and elixir of health. Nicholas Culpeper and Wesley were among authors offering versions of Daffy's Elixir for domestic practitioners. Senna was the unifying component. The *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* rated senna "a very useful cathartic" although warning of its nauseous flavor and its tendency "to gripe." Aromatic seeds and licorice served to improve the taste. The cathartics jalap, rhubarb, and manna were added to the following version, no doubt to make it "operate more briskly."[9]

> 5 Oz of Aniseeds, 3 Oz Fennelseeds, 4 Oz Parsley seeds, 6 Oz Spanish Liquorish, 5 Oz Senna, 1 Oz Rhubarb, 3 Oz Elecampane, 7 Oz Jalap, 6 Oz Manna, 12 [drams] Saffron, 2 # Rassons, 1/4 Oz Cochineal
>
> Stone ye raisins, slice ye roots, bruise ye Jalap and put all the above ingredients into two Gallons of Brandy, keep it cork'd tight fifteen days then strain it.
>
> Pk, Hr

In addition to alcoholic infusions such as Daffy's Elixir and Turlington's Balsam, distilled medicines were common. Popular cookery books, such as those by Hannah Glasse and Eliza Smith, included receipts for cordials and waters of medicinal nature that might have been distilled at home. One of the most highly regarded was Hungarian or Hungary Water. A Moravian surveyor noted rosemary being grown in the North Carolina settlements and commented, "Hungary Water is made from it."[10]

Just as liquid patent medicines were duplicated at home, pills were compounded by domestic practitioners. Horry recorded two receipts for purgative pills in her manuscript:

> Soap Pills
>
> Take 2 Oz. Castile Soap, 1/4 Oz. Rhubarb, beat it well together in a Marble Mortar with just Honey enough to make it into pills. This quantity may be made into about 216 Pills.
>
> Hr
>
> Antibilious Pills
>
> Myrrh 1 oz. Succotrine Aloes 1 oz. Tartar Emetic 3 Grains Syrrup of saffron a sufficient quantity to make the mass into pills.
>
> Hr

Aloes pills were marketed as Scot's pills. Wesley published a receipt for "Scotch Pills" made of aloes and sweet oil. Such antibilious pills were related to Dr. Anderson's famous pills, which William Byrd mentioned as beneficial "to force a Passage thro' his Body." According to Joseph Doddridge's account, Anderson's pills were known in frontier settlements as well. **11**

In addition to Turlington's Balsam, Daffy's Elixir and Anderson's Pills, a number of old English remedies were well known to early southerners. Newspaper advertisements and store inventories confirm the availability of Bateman's Pectoral Drops, Godfrey's Cordial, Hooper's Female Pills, James's Fever Powder, Lockyer's Pills, Squire's Elixir, Stoughton's Bitters, and British Rock Oil. As the nineteenth century progressed, the list lengthened.

Domestic healers might have chosen to purchase exotic ingredients for counterfeiting patent medicines at home rather than to purchase the preparation. Other basic medicines were compounded at home—purgative pills, green salve, eye water, itch ointment, and bitters. The thirteen manuscripts consulted for this book each contained instructions for all of these concoctions, using simple cures and dooryard ingredients along with exotic medicaments from around the world.

Chapter 6—
Acute Diseases

Diseases were historically classified as either acute or chronic through centuries of debate over details and treatments. Acute diseases were recognized by sudden onset, fever, and involvement of a specific part of the body. [1]

The classification of a given disease as acute or chronic is not always obvious. While most infectious diseases fit into the acute category, consumption (tuberculosis) is an exception, being a chronic infection. However, consumption falls most logically into this chapter, with other respiratory complaints, both acute and chronic. Conversely, not all acute diseases stem from contagions: for example, apoplexy (stroke) is definitely acute although not caused by a pathogen.

Fevers

The acute infectious diseases vaguely referred to as fevers were among the most dreaded and the most threatening. Any one of a myriad of illnesses might have been declared an ague or fever, especially malaria, influenza, or yellow fever. There was much confusion about feverish illnesses in the medical literature and perhaps even more confusion among practitioners. And because fever often accompanies gastrointestinal or respiratory upset, the remedies suggested for all such inflammatory diseases showed distinct similarities and overlap.

This section will first look at receipts specifically for allaying fever or ague. In many cases an ague or intermitting fever was malaria, which responded well to the quinine-containing bark of the cinchona tree of South America, known as Jesuits' bark, Peruvian bark, red bark, and most often simply the bark.

One of the simpler preparations of cinchona bark in the southern sources was handed down from Eliza Lucas Pinckney to her daughter, Harriott Pinckney Horry:

> A Decoction of the Bark
>
> Put three or four Spoonfulls of white Hickory Ashes into a Bowie, and pour on it one Pint of Boiling Water, let it Settle and then pour it off clear, and add to it one Ounce & quarter of Jesuits Bark finely powdered, & Boil it well together and when it is done take two Spoonfulls every Hour, or every Second Hour as your Stomack will bear it.
>
> Pk, Hr

The Pinckney and Horry receipt books also listed an infusion of Samson's snakeroot in Madeira wine "For an Intermitting Fever." This remedy might have been meant to be given with the decoction of the bark, for eighteenth-century fever remedies typically combined Peruvian bark with a snakeroot.

The following piedmont North Carolina combination of bark and root was a shortened version of William Buchan's "Compound Decoction of the Bark." Bark and root were commonly administered with spirits and one or more aromatic ingredients as in the aromatic water detailed here.

> take peruvian Bark & Snake Root powdered Each three Drams Boil them in a pint of Water to one half Strain it add an ounce & half of aromatic water taken in ye decline of fevers when ye purse [pulse] is low ye Voice Weak & ye head affected with a Stupor ye dose four Spoonfulls Every 4 or 6 hours
>
> Al
>
> aromatic water
>
> take one pound of cinnamon bark Bruised one & a half gallons of Water & one pint of Strong Spirits Steept 2 days then distill of one Gallon for Spirituous Cinnamon water one Gallon of Water & one of Spirits Steept 2 days Still of one Gallon.
>
> Al

Most receipts seem to have conformed to Buchan's opinion that "In obstinate agues, the bark seldom succeeded unless assisted by snake-root, ginger, canella alba, or some other warm aromatic." For "Huschams Tincture of Bark," saffron and cochineal were infused in brandy along with the cinchona bark and snakeroot (PD). John Wesley included orange peel in his version of Huxham's tincture. Such ill-tasting preparations were commonly labeled *bitters*. [2]

The Dorothea Christina Schmidt manuscript suggested, "To make a good Bitters: Camelmill flower, Small Snake root, Jesuit bark, Sentry [centaury], Sweet Orange peal, Tansey, and Wormwood." A similar receipt in a letter from Georgia listed "Ginsin Root" (perhaps ginseng or gentian), with orange peel, small snakeroot, chamomile flowers, and bark. The method for preparing was simply "steep them in rum or brandy—makes an exceeding good bitter." Christian Gottlieb Reuter acknowledged the medicinal repute of centaury: "The people who have come hither from Europe use it much as a tea for fever."[3]

More than a dozen New World plants were called *snakeroot*. Reuter's comments suggest that these roots were thought most proper for treating snakebite or for a purge. The exception was Virginia snakeroot, listed as "a blood purifier and for sweating." Virginia snakeroot had been widely used for fevers even before the discovery of the Peruvian bark and may have been the snakeroot intended for

the previous fever draughts. Samson's snakeroot was similarly esteemed for fevers and was commonly included in bitters. [4]

Peruvian bark was rarely administered alone. When snakeroot was not combined with the cinchona bark, an emetic or purgative was ordinarily included instead. Horry preferred to add tartar emetic or the laxative senna or cream of tartar to her bark potions, as in the following two receipts. The "Dutch method" must have been widely known, for it was also included (untitled) in the Rachel Stout Allen manuscript.

> Dutch Method of giving the Bark
>
> 1 oz. Bark, 1 oz. cream of Tartar, & 50 cloves all finely pounded, mix them together, and divide this quantity into 24 doses, take 4 doses each day for 2 days, then 3 doses per day for 2 days, then 2 doses & so on.
>
> Hr

> An Excellent decoction of Bark
>
> Take l/2 oz. red Bark and a small pugil of Senna & a pint of cold water, set it on the fire and let it boil only 5 minutes after it begins to boil, then take it off, let it settle a few minutes and pour it into a decanter to which add one glass of Brandy. NB. When it is necessary to give the Bark in the remission of the fever it is best to add a grain or two of Tartar Emetic to the above pint of decoction, a glassfull every two hours or every hour according to the strength of the stomach and length of the intermission.
>
> Hr

In a similar receipt Horry explained the idea behind such use of senna with extract of cinchona bark: "otherwise it will be necessary to give something cathartic while taking it, as there is no purgative quality in this extract."

Since malarial fevers were less common in the upcountry regions, it is not surprising that the reliance on bark and the incidence of fever remedies were greatest in earlier sources and in those from the lowcountry. Bark was included in the backcountry manuscript attributed to Allen, however, there was no mention of bark in William Lenoir's book of cures and only one reference among John Thompson's notes.

Backcountry folk nevertheless faced a number of feverish disorders. On the North Carolina frontier many complained "of fever . . . brought on by the autumn chill." Depletion was a first defense: "Purging and vomiting seems to be the best treatment, and generally breaks up the fever."[5]

Experimentation with native herbs and increased reliance on dooryard remedies expanded the list of fever medicines. The efficacy of native barks was judged

in part by bitter taste, a property of the South American cinchona. The bark and roots of dogwood and tulip tree (yellow poplar) were widely considered equal to the cinchona. According to William Byrd, "Our chief medicine was Dogwood Bark, which we used, instead of that of Peru, with good Success." Buchan's 1816 materia medica listed dogwood (berries, bark, and roots) as a valuable bitter "long employed in intermittent fevers . . . possessing properties closely allied to the Peruvian bark." The tulip poplar was similarly touted as a "strong bitter." Observant traveler Peter Kalm reported, "many people believe [tulip tree] roots to be as efficacious against the fever as the Jesuit's bark . . . or peel from roots of dogwood." Benjamin Smith Barton agreed with these uses and was "inclined to think" the barks of oaks, wild cherry, sassafras, persimmon, and willow "might be used, with advantage, as substitutes for the Peruvian bark." [6]

Additional fever medicines in southern manuscripts involved calamus, dandelion roots, ground ivy, horehound, holly, English (common) plantain, long plantain, star grass root, and wormwood. Barton observed in 1810 that the American countryside was "so rich in bitter vegetables, that there can be no necessity for having recourse to the foreign articles of this class; especially when such articles are only to be procured at a high price."[7]

Ague

Calomus Aromaticus finely powderd as much as will lie upon a shilling given in gruel or Baum Tea two Hours before the fit is expected to be taken in Bed & perspiration encouraged—

PD

For a Fever

Eight Sprigs of Wild Hoar hound and two of English Plaintain (the Common Plaintain) boiled in a Quart of Water to a Pint. Divide that Pint into three parts, and let the Patient take one every Morning for three Mornings. Tried and proved Effectual

Hr

Fever

Long plain fine Leaves also calld Rib grass Dandy Lion roots & Ground Ivy made into tea good to be drank in any fever.

PD

Herbs brewed into a tea as in these receipts fit the notion of a cooling medicine for fevers. Conversely, alcohol-based herbal infusions were called into play as preventive or as cure. In Bethabara, North Carolina, "A Committee of twenty Brethren was called to consider the fever which we have every fall, and to

make plans for the preservation of health. It was finally agreed unanimously that in place of ordinary brandy or beer some should be made for use during the heat of summer and in the fall in which certain valuable bitter herbs and roots should be distilled." [8] Alternately, the herbs were simply allowed to steep in spirits:

> To cure the slow fevor
>
> Take Wild Cherry tree Bark & Slaregrass [star grass] Root & Wormwood Stept in Rum Drink it in a Dram Al Times in the Day
>
> Bl

> For an Ague and Fever
>
> Infuse a Pint of Hickory Ashes and a Double Handfull of Wormwood in a Quart of Madiera Wine twenty four Hours in the Sun, and Drink one Glass of it in the Morning Fasting and One at Night.
>
> Pk, Hr

Ashes and the lye resulting from their infusion played a regular part in medicine of this period.[9] Another of Horry's receipts included ashes and salt, the result of burning salt beef:

> For the Fever and Flux
>
> Take a pound of the Saltest Beef you can get, put it in the fire and burn it to a Cinder, pound it and sift it & put it into half a Gallon of rum. let it stand by ye fire or in the Sun shaking it now and then. half a glass to be given twice a day, and two days will cure the Patient.
>
> Hr

Animal simples were enlisted in the fight against fever. Reuter's 1764 inventory related "a piece of [rattlesnake] laid in water, and the water drunk; used for fever." Hartshorn (the horn of a male red European deer) was also recognized for this purpose. Wesley recommended spirit of hartshorn for fever with pain in the limbs; however, John Quincy's 1736 *Pharmacopoeia Officinalis* dismissed hartshorn as "much more in esteem amongst Family Doctresses, than in the Shops."[10]

Horn scrapings in vinegar resulted in the preparation spirit of Mindererus. Dr. William Maclean wrote disapprovingly of a situation he encountered on a journey to Tennessee from his home in Lincoln County, North Carolina, in 1811. A woman was ill with "the Winter fever or Typhus Meteor of Dr. Cullen. . . . Medicine given by [a local doctor] was Sp. Menderer. . . . The Genl. practice was to bleed Physic, & Blister freely." The patient was given a cold bath, "Which brought on great misery & she died the following day."[11]

The sources compared here contain cures for a number of fevers and other contagions. Some were known and named as they are today, but others are diffi-

cult to identify. The story woven from this sampling of manuscripts is necessarily incomplete.

Smallpox

Smallpox was easily recognized and greatly feared. Before the introduction of vaccination, there was no defense. Early attempts at inoculation utilized infected matter from an individual stricken with the pox. Through this dangerous procedure the patient artificially contracted smallpox in the hope that the disease would be lighter than in a natural case. Fear and desperation were apparent in this Moravian diary entry: "they had with them one man who was sick with smallpox, and this brought the infection into our town [in April 1779]. Our ignorant and malicious neighbors threatened to destroy the town if we inoculated, so the small-pox stayed among us until October. . . . This condition practically cut off all intercourse with Salem. . . . It was customary for [those passing through town] to have a leaf of tobacco which they smelled as a preventive, some stuck tobacco leaves in their nostrils, one even saw some passersby who had smeared tar on the forehead, under the nose, and elsewhere." [12]

Two years later the risky procedure of inoculation was offered in Salem despite continuing resistance in outlying settlements. In 1786, when smallpox again threatened the settlements, residents agreed on a general inoculation, with mixed results: "This was done for some thirty persons in Salem, adults and children, of whom one child passed away, as did one youth in Bethabara, and two children in Bethania, where ninety persons were sick, some by inoculation and some by the natural disease." Other communities were slower to commit to inoculation. According to James Kershaw's diary from 1793, he braved inoculation two weeks ahead of a general smallpox inoculation in Camden, South Carolina.[13]

When worry about smallpox again surfaced in the Moravian communities in 1801, there was a new method of protection against the illness: "This disease has not been among us for fifteen years, and it is time that something should be done for our young people who have grown up since then. A new kind of smallpox has recently been discovered in Europe, in which the worst features of this disease are almost entirely absent. In the last newspaper, Dr. Calvin Jones, of this state, announces that he hopes to receive this kind of smallpox, which is called cowpox, and offers to inoculate with it."[14]

During the following year the cowpox vaccine was indeed acquired from Jones and "about eighty persons in Salem, older and younger, were inoculated by Br. Vierling with cowpox. Most of them recovered easily and successfully, and a number had no illness whatever." The results seemed almost too good to be true. "If this kind of pox proves to be a sure and lasting preventive against the common small-pox, as experience seems more and more to attest, we cannot thank our Lord enough that so large a number of our children and youth have had the disease so easily." Within the same year the evidence grew more convincing:

"Here in America it has been used for some time, and it can be seen plainly that it is a preventive against ordinary smallpox." [15]

Despite reports of successes, distrust and fear of cowpox vaccination remained difficult to overcome. In 1802 eminent Charleston physicians launched a publicity campaign to educate the populace about the safety and benefits of the new inoculation. Their arguments in the 1803 *Palladium of Knowledge* almanac comparing smallpox and cowpox vaccination undoubtedly impacted both coastal and interior regions.

If no experienced inoculator were at hand, Buchan's 1794 *Domestic Medicine* urged parents to perform the procedure on their children. Within the next quarter century the new cowpox vaccine all but vanquished smallpox from the Western world. Buchan's 1816 edition no longer included a chapter on smallpox, substituting instead a history of the discovery of cowpox and the development of safe vaccination.

None of the manuscript sources under consideration here listed a treatment specifically for smallpox, but popular publications offered advice on the subject. Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* suggested the common arsenal—bleeding, purging, and even blistering—with involved instructions about the timing of each operation. Among Wesley's suggested treatments was bleeding from the foot for violent cases. Plasters, poultices, bark decoctions, cathartics, and dietary recommendations rounded out the attack on smallpox. In other words, symptoms were treated by techniques commonly employed in other fevers and cutaneous eruptions. It should be noted, however, that "the pox" in many cases referred not to smallpox but to venereal eruptions.

Terrifying outbreaks of the virulent yellow fever were generally confined to port cities, where it was introduced by ships arriving from the Caribbean. As with other fevers, the heaviest mortality occurred among Native Americans and newcomers from Europe.

Other Contagions

Each year brought contagions, some more threatening than others. For example, in 1784 the North Carolina backcountry was visited by dual epidemics: "measles spread . . . many grown persons as well as children were ill . . . this dangerous illness was followed by a severe whooping cough." In 1802, the same year the cowpox inoculation was begun in the Moravian settlements, a debate arose about how to handle the threat of a measles epidemic. The Moravian records reported in May that "Measles are epidemic in and about Raleigh." By July, "Measles have appeared in our neighborhood and it was suggested that they be brought into town as we have learned by experience that this disease is more severe in winter. It was decided that it would be well to wait until after dog-days." And in December, "Some of our younger people and children have measles, brought into town by a stranger. More than one hundred persons in this congre-

gation, large and small, have not had measles, as it is almost thirteen years since we have had a case in town, and then also the disease was brought by a traveler." [16]

When a young Pennsylvania adventurer on his way to Tennessee in 1795 became "very much indisposed" with the measles, he "Drank abundance of Linseed tea and sweat violently all day." Such treatment was standard for his symptoms of violent cough and pain in head and eyes, complaints that were also associated with whooping cough.[17]

Whooping cough was alternately termed *chin cough*. Buchan cautioned his readers that this disease often proved fatal to children, and the manuscript sources contain receipts specifically for whooping cough.

Hooping Cough

The internal part of this receipt is linseed Tea sweetned with sugar Candy for their drink The External is three Cloves Garlick bruised very small then well mixed with one ounce of new unsalted Butter applied like a [———] to the soles of the feet & wrists repeating it as it dries this she believes saved her children when most around them died—

PD

Buchan commented, "The garlic ointment [made with lard] is a well-known remedy in North-Britain for the chin-cough. . . . With this the soles of the feet may be rubbed." Wesley suggested rubbing the feet with lard alone in cases of whooping cough, although for hoarseness he listed garlic and lard. For croup and hoarseness, Horry followed this tradition of applying garlic and lard not only to the soles of the feet but also to the back. Massaging feet, wrists, hands, the abdomen, the back, or the throat was common practice in treating whooping cough.[18]

Cure for the whooping cough

rub the child Gently [with rum and turpentine] by the fire down the neck and chin night and morning [from] London newspaper

Cm

Hooping Cough

Oil of amber & Hartshorn drops rub well the palms of the hands pit of the stomach & chine of the Back Give to a child a Teaspoonful of Antimonial Wine every other Night— Treacle & Vinegar of each an equal quantity—to be taken when the Cough is troublesome this with light diet & fresh air or change of air will soon Cure the Hooping Cough.

PD

Ever-popular purges and emetics formed part of the offensive against whooping cough. Wesley recommended salt of tartar as the proper laxative; however, others

found unrefined lye a more convenient alternative. A traveling physician wrote, "Dr. Kollack informed me that he cured the whooping cough by the use of lye, which was more convenient than the salt of Tartar." [19]

Purging and vomiting were thought beneficial not only for whooping cough but in cases of mumps as well.

Mumps

apply Mulein leaves steeped or wilterd in hot vinegar to the swelled part—& occasionally give a dose of salts if the fever is high a gentle emetic to be given.

SC

Just as the incidence and threat of measles, whooping cough, and mumps have dramatically declined with recent medical advances, other contagious diseases of concern to eighteenth-century southerners have all but disappeared from modern memory. Saint Anthony's fire was a name formerly attached to two very different diseases—ergotism and erysipelas—both of which can now be considered deceased diseases in America. Ergot is a fungus that attacks grains, especially rye, producing deformed seed heads. Eating infected grain over an extended period can result in either muscle cramps and contractions or gangrene leading to amputation. Erysipelas is a contagious streptococcal infection, now rare in our culture, with symptoms including severe swelling and redness, especially of the face. It is likely that the latter disease was the Saint Anthony's fire for which the following treatments were prescribed.[20]

Cure for St Anthonys fire

take English sorrel Tops & houseleek tops and beat them well togather then put one teaspoonfull of Jemacah peper grotto fine with it & then take wry meal or flower & vinnigar and make it in the form a poltice and apply it to the parts Efected & let it Stay on 24 hours if that don't cure put on another. any catching inflamation may be cured the same way tried.

Tm

Cure for Saint Anthony's fire

Flour & white flannel wrapt round the place effected.

Ln

Applications of meal or flour to the inflamed parts of the body reflected a widespread folk tradition. Wesley noted, "In Scotland the common people cover the part with a linen cloth covered with meal." Buchan also attributed to Scottish folk practice the use of a "mealy cloth" for Saint Anthony's fire, approving it as "far from being improper."[21]

Throat and Chest Inflammations

From the common cold to a consumption to a "putrid sore throat," respiratory infections were of deep concern in those days before the discovery of antibiotics. As Wesley wrote, "Obstructed perspirations (vulgarly called catching cold) is one great source of diseases." Gentle sweats were recommended at the first sign of a cold.[22]

The elusive cure for the common cold was generally attempted with kitchen physic. A sweet and soothing draught seems to have been the rule. Most published health guides listed milk among ingredients beneficial for chest or breast complaints.

> For a fresh Cold
>
> A large Glass of Rum an equal quantity of Milk mix them in a half pint Bason fill up the Bason with boiling Water sweeten it & drink it going to Bed—
> or For a Cold half a pint of Water a Tablespoonful of Treacle & a little grated Ginger at Night going to Bed.
>
> PD

Other kitchen remedies for a cold included eggs or lemon. Lenoir's receipt for shortness of breath, "Every morning take an Egg stired up in about a dram-Glass full of water," resembled the following cold cure, which Thompson collected from "a Frenchman": "To cure a cold—Take the yolks of 2 Eggs, beat them well then pour one pint of Boiling water to it. Sweeten and Drink it going to bed."

"An Excellent Cure for a Cough" (SC) boasted honey, mutton suet, and lime juice, sour orange, or vinegar. Wesley wrote of a clever method for preparing a similar medicine: "make a hole through a lemon and fill it with honey. Roast it and catch the juice. Take a teaspoonful of this frequently."[23] A similar sweetened lemon preparation with herbal additions was suggested for hoarseness:

> For a Hoarseness
>
> A whole Lemon boiled till tender then pounded very fine with two ounces of sugar candy two tablespoonfuls of sweet oil &. . . . Ladies bedstraw or runnet (query whether I shd write it runnet or Burner) must be gathered about July when it is in full flower & dry stalks & leaves together—
>
> PD

The dooryard garden, forests, and fields offered numerous plants for treating chest complaints. Reuter's inventory listed fenugreek "used as a tea for colds, coughs, etc." and watercress "particularly good for lung trouble." Reuter identified yarrow as "a good breast tea," noting that "Some eat it in the morning with bread and butter." Lenoir suggested black locust bark for consumption. Accord-

ing to Reuter, "Colt's Foot" was useful in medicine for sheep or people, and "Calves Foot (Aaron)" (arum) was good for asthma and lung trouble, "the dried roots . . . taken in honey or syrup." Byrd agreed that coltsfoot and maidenhair were proper for cough and cold, both being "Excellent Pectoral Plants." Herbs gathered from the wild were considered best: it "may pass for a Rule in Botanicks, that where any Vegetable is planted by the hand of Nature, it has more Verture." [24]

Several receipts followed the traditions from a century earlier, when complicated preparations were the mode. The following compound herbal decoction from the Allen commonplace book was duplicated as "Receit for the consumption or a stubern cough" in John Allen's 1817 daybook:

> A Drink for any Inward Weakness take Groundivy and Yarrow White plantain Land Liverwort agrimony Bittersweets Hartstongue Maidenhair Cinquefoylde Strawberry Leaves and Coltsfoot lears take a Small handfull of Each and cut them Small and Boil in three Quarts of Water Untill it Comes to two then take one gill Night and Morning Milk Warm or more if Necessary if the Cant all Be got Such as can But or if Curcunstance Should render it Difficult or unsafe to take any of the Yerbs on any account the May be omitted; polopadom is sometimes put in With them.
>
> Al

The Allen manuscript included a second polyherbal cure. This infusion of watercress, sassafras, nettle, sarsaparilla, lignum vitae (guaiacum), burdock, and eglantine rose was specifically for consumption.

> A Diet Drink to be Wrought in Beer
>
> 2 handfulls of Water Cresses 2 handfulls of Sassafras roots 2 handfulls of Nettles 2 handfulls of Sasaborelle 2 pounds of Lignumvity 2 handfulls of Burdock roots 2 handful;s of Sweet Bryers Rots all this infuse in 3 or 4 gallons of Malt Beer—for the Consumtion.
>
> Al

Combinations of herbs infused in ales, wines, meads, or wheys were popular as treatment for chronic coughs. These diet drinks were generally gentle medicines "which they call Kitchen Physick." As Quincy said, "Many people likewise will be prevail'd upon to engage in a Course of this nature, when the Apprehension of Medicines in other Forms is very disagreeable." In other words, a cupful of ale, wine, or whiskey made the medicine go down. Such strengthening drinks were considered necessary for consumption and recurrent fevers.[25]

> Frelands Cure for a Cough . . .
>
> Take a handful of the moss off of the North side of a Spanish Oak, & a handful of tops of Motherwert and a handfull of Agrimony & put in

a quart whiskey-& drink a good stout dram every night-& if one Quart willnt do try a second quart.

Ln

Coughs were cause for great concern, for continued coughing was thought to lead to consumption (pulmonary tuberculosis). The belief that one disease was capable of transforming into another was generally accepted. The plethora of remedies suggested for cough and consumption indicate a desperate struggle against this wasting illness. The difficulty of diagnosing tuberculosis in its early stages explains the reputed cures of the disease, because the only obstinate coughs cured were not caused by the tuberculosis bacteria.

Another herbal receipt from the Allen manuscript utilized angelica, horseradish, and elecampane, resulting in a buttery syrup. [26]

For the consumtion

take angillico horseredish allcompain Each one Large handfull put them into an Earthin pot with two gallons of Spring Water cover it cloce Set it on the coles and Stew it half away then Strain it and ad thereto half a pound of fresh butter half a pound of treakle then Stew it 5 hours take in the morning and at night half a point milk warm—Diet to bee of Ry.

Al

Joseph Doddridge recorded similar herbal traditions: "Coughs, and pulmonary consumptions, were treated with a great variety of syrups, the principal ingredients of which were commonly spikenard [wild sarsaparilla] and elecampane." He further commented that these syrups gave little relief.[27]

Anne Cameron's "Receipt to cure an obstinate Cough" includes another interesting combination of traditional ingredients—comfrey, borehound, elecampane, honey, licorice, sugar, and lemon juice—with instructions to "put it into a bottle & cork it, untill you wish to use it." Following a dose of this syrup, Cameron advised, "let lump of salt petre dissolve in mouth."

Closely related to Thompson's and Lenoir's raw-egg cure for colds were cough medicines from the Schmidt and Horry manuscripts. These remedies added comfrey, nutmeg, and wine to the sweetened egg yolk. Horry's receipt was nearly identical to this cure but required twice as much comfrey.

To Cure a Consumption

Take one handfull of Comfry Root, Scrape it clean of and boil it to a jelly then straine it, and take yolks of Six new lay'd Eggs, 3/4 lb. brown Sugar, and one Nutmeg grated in it, beat them all together and put it to a quart of Madeira Wine, let her take a Wine Glass full the first thing in the morning, and at Night going to bed.

Sm

Although drastic treatments were attempted in many cases of serious affliction, the following simple kitchen remedy was an exception to that rule. Eliza Pinckney apparently took this cure from a published medical guide "By A. Hill Esq. Vol. 1st pa 137."

For, even, afar-gone Consumption

Take a pint, or a quart a day of Coffee made with milk instead of Water, and take it at pleasure like other Coffee; Surprising changes have been wrought in a fortnight, says Mr. Hill, by this humble recipe.

Pk

Various products from coniferous trees were employed in respiratory disorders. Spruce or pine needles, spruce beer, tar, turpentine, pitch, or rosin were entered into homemade remedies. An 1820 entry in Lenoir's book suggested a decoction or tea of spruce for a bad cough, which was not a new idea. John Tobler's 1767 *South Carolina and Georgia Almanack* advised a tea of the tops of young pines, especially of the "Spruce Kind" for an old cough. [28] A lowcountry receipt combined spruce beer with rum:

For a Consumption

Take half a pint of spruce Beer & Rum mixed two thirds of spruce Beer to one of Rum make it milk warm & take it Night & Morning till the Quantity of 3 quarts be drank—if half a pint be found too much for the Patient to take at a time the quantity may be abated according to the strength of the patient—NB this cured an old Servant of my Fathers after he had been given over by the Docters who said he'd not live five Day this I know to be true as witness.

PD

Tar, turpentine, or rosin with honey formed another basic remedy for chest complaints. Butter might also be included in the dose as in the Allen receipt below. Lenoir added a second receipt, "Cure for Tissick by Dr. ORiley 16 Mar 1807 at Wilkesbo," that directed stewing equal quantities of tar and honey.

Saml Genning's Cure a Dry Cough (or Tissick)

Take about a quarter of a pound of new Tar half a pound of Virgin honey mix it well together & take as much of it as his stomac will bear in the morning before he gets out of bed & then ly some time after taking it, & take of it again at night going to bed—

Ln

take white turpentine hunney and fresh Butter mix them all together take the Bigness of a Chestnut in the Morning.

Al

Wesley submitted "white resin powdered and mixed with honey" to be taken for consumption. Alternately, patients might take in "the steam of white resin and bees' wax boiling on a hot fire shovel." [29] Inhalation of melted white pitch and yellow beeswax was noted in the 1806–16 South Carolina manuscript (SC) coupled with a newspaper dipping (circa 1815) offering a variation: "In Consumption—Take a piece of rosin and turpentine, and place them on the chafing dish of coals; cause the patient to inhale the smoke."

Licorice and linseed were also widely used in cough medicines and for kidney complaints. As the Alien manuscript put it, "take Linseed 2 spoonfulls Liquorice half an ounce Stew them for Some houres them Strain it taken in difficulty of Making Water and Coughs and Complaints of ye Brest Emollient mucilagient Liquor." Horry's potent cough remedy, "Liquorice Rum for Coughs," was simply licorice in rum. The dose was 1/2 a glass going to bed."

When the seriousness of the situation required an adjustment of the humors, the following pill was likely to provoke vomiting, purging, and sweating in addition to its soothing dose of opium and alcohol.

> Pills for a Cough
>
> Take 2 Oz. Ippo. 5 Gr. Rhubarb & 5 gr Magnesia, of Antimonial Wine & Laudanum each 10 drops, add as much honey and wheat flour as will make it into pills and take this quantity for one dose at night going to bed.
>
> Hr

As its name suggests, pleurisy root was employed for pleurisy as well as for consumption and other respiratory complaints. Reuter directed that "a little of the root cooked and drunk does wonders."

> Cure for Consumption in its last Stages (or fever) . . .
>
> Take Butterfly root (by some called plurisy root) dry it and chew it like Tobacco friequently and swallow the Juice.
>
> Ln

"Pleurisies which are not frequent in this Climate have, of late been common and in many instances Mortal," came the news from Abbeyville, South Carolina, to Pennsylvania in late March 1798 with a vivid description of the pain associated with this respiratory inflammation.[30] Another correspondent wrote that the "boisterous" winter of 1809 in York County, South Carolina,

> produced several cases of pleurisy . . . some of which have been fatal. I was severely attacked with it . . . the most alarming sickness I ever had . . . the least motion seemed to run thorns through my vitals . . . My principal remedies were applied by myself & my distressed Mary Ann. . . . The one which I prescribed myself I suppose would be obvious to most people. It was a plentiful dose of castor oil. It is an

> active medicine, & very expeditious in the operation; but yet the short time, before its operation, is an age of distress. The application prescribed by my wife, & which had a beneficial effect, in less than 2 minutes, was heated salt. Take nearly the fill of 2 stockings, & heat it in a pan, till you cannot bear your hand on it. Put it in stockings, & apply it to the painful parts—when it seems to withdraw to another place, follow it, & when the salt cools heat it again &c. [31]

Depletion strategies were also called into the battle. Although Doddridge commented, "pleurisy was the only disease which was supposed to require blood letting," few people were so conservative with phlebotomy at that time. As discussed earlier, letting blood was often primary treatment for a multitude of diseases, disorders, or accidents.[32]

Another native herb considered efficacious in pleurisy, senega or seneka snakeroot, was popularized in 1735 by John Tennent of Virginia in his "Essay on Pleurisy." Curiously, Tennent based his argument on the fact that symptoms of pleurisy were similar to snakebite poisoning. Early settlers observed Indians using senega to cure the bite of rattlesnakes. Most important among the snakeroots, senega was touted by Tennent and others for an assortment of complaints. Among the personal manuscripts consulted, seneka snakeroot was recommended for croup (SC) as well as for pleurisy.

Alternate remedy for croup was sought through cold bathing and drinking cold water. The Pinckney manuscript outlined internal and external cold-water treatments:

> The Croup
>
> The journal of health says—when a child is taken with croup instantly apply cold water, ice water if possible—suddenly and freely to the neck & chest with a sponge. The breathing will almost instantly be relieved. Soon as possible let the sufferer drink as much as it can; then wipe it dry, cover it warm & soon a quiet slumber will relieve all anxiety. A friend of ours who has repeatedly tried this remedy informs us that it never failed to afford almost instant relief.
>
> Pk

According to Doddridge, "The croup, or what was then called the bold hives, was a common disease among the children, many of whom died of it. For the cure . . . juice of roasted onions or garlic was given in large doses." Croup might accompany different respiratory infections, perhaps most commonly diphtheria.[33]

Just as garlic poultices were applied to the feet for whooping cough or hoarseness, croup and serious sore throat were thought to require similar treatment. It is noteworthy that the base of the following poultice was not lard but common cornmeal mush.

Cure for the French Measles otherwise called the Quinsey or Scarlet Fever . . .

Alexr. Wakefield says it is a present cure—To Wash the Patients feet well in warm Salt-water and make a poltice of Mush and Beat Garlick and put over the Mush and Lay it warm to the Bottoms of the feet—And give them Vinegar and Honey with Salt-petre in it to Drink—& be Careful of Ketching Cold for some days—

Ln

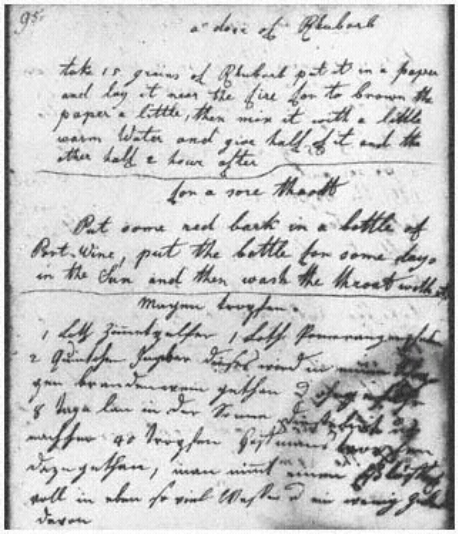
Epidemics of "throat sickness" or "putrid sore throat"—what today might be identified as diphtheria, scarlet fever, or strep throat—took a large toll. Ann Manigault recorded in her journal, "A good many people died of the sore-throat," in the South Carolina lowcountry during the winter of 1770–71. [34]

A melancholy saga of rampant illness and deaths from the "throat sickness" unfolds in the Moravian records. Hardly a single household escaped the severe throat pain, high fever, and vomiting. Such epidemics recurred. During 1792, a particularly grim year, epidemic throat disease raged in piedmont North Carolina for eight months. Later that year it broke out "in the more northern provinces and with much greater severity." One Moravian journalist observed that by giving patients "more fresh air and less strong medicine, the sickness seemed to yield." The great assortment of preparations and treatments for sore throat preserved in the manuscript sources tell another story. For this serious group of diseases, drastic and often dramatic cures were attempted.[35]

A man stricken with "the prevelant disease," the throat sickness, "had gotten an emetic from Mary Schmid, but he vomited without it." The Moravian diarist advised his wife "to send to Salem for the doctor, but she said it would do no good. [The diarist] gave him twelve pills, and left seven for him to take next day if the first had no effect. The above-mentioned emetic consisted of indigo, blue-stone, and camphor. In the afternoon his son brought the report that the pills had had little effect, so I gave him sixteen more to be taken this evening and tomorrow, and then they should send for China drops [possibly cinchona or China root (sarsaparilla)]." The composition of the pills was not stated, but they may have acted as a purgative.[36] The following treatment included a purge (senna) along with an emetic to aid the hydrochloric acid solution, which was probably intended as a gargle.

For an Ulcerated Sore Throat

Put sixty drops of the Spirit of Marine Salt with a table spoonful of honey of Roses into a quart of water, except the Ulcers in the Throat are very foul with white crust on them, in that particular case eighty Drops may be put into the quart of water. In general an Emetick should be given in the beginning and a Decoction of an ounce of Bark with a quarter of an ounce senna boil'd in a quart of water should be given at the rate of a wine glassful every two hours except it purges


95
a dose of Rhubarb
take 15 grains of Rhubarb put it in a paper
and lay it near the fire for to brown the
paper a little, then mix it with a little
warm Water and give half of it and the
other half a hour after
for a sore throat
Put some red bark in a bottle of
Port-Wine, put the bottle for some days
in the Sun and then wash the throat with it

"For a Sore Throat."
Dorothea Christina Schmidt Household Book, circa 1772. Note entries in English alongside those in German.
Courtesy Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

too much, in that case it may be given every four or five hours. If the patient has been accustomed to wine, a moderate use of it may be continued if there is a fever.

Hr

Roses and honey were employed in various forms to allay inflammations. Honey of roses was a fragrant concoction in which rose petals were stirred into boiled and skimmed honey and the container set into boiling water to infuse. The product was then strained. The medicinal reputation of both honey and roses had ancient origins. While suffering from throat inflammation, Francis Asbury bemoaned, "Honey, a remedy so excellent in such cases, was not to be had." [37]

These courses of treatment for sore throat covered a wide range—emetics, mouthwashes or gargles, laxatives, and the bark. Asbury's journal describes his reliance on bloodletting and blisters as well as poultices, which also seem to have been widely used by the manuscript writers.

Mouth waters and gargles were concocted from diverse ingredients, including kitchen remedies as well as imported and exotic elements.

A Good Gargle for a sore throat

Scrape or grate the outside of carrots in a mug, & pour on the Gratings boiling water, Cover it Close and let it stand untill cold, [gargle] well and often.

Cm

for a sore throat

Put some red bark in a bottle of Port Wine, put the bottle for some days in the Sun and then wash the throat with it.

Sm

Recipe for sore Throat by Dr. Irvine

Gum Myrrh 1/2 a dram Cryde Sal ammoniac 1/2 an oz dissolve them in a pint of water—add 2 tablespoonsful of vinegar & 2 of molasses—

Al

Cure for a Sore throat

Boil Rattle weed root & wash your throat with it, & if you swallow a little it is not dangerous.

Ln

The gargle which I used first, to scatter, if possible, the inflammation, was sage tea, honey, vinegar, and mustard; then that which was used to accelerate the gathering, was mallows with a fig cut in pieces: and lastly, to strengthen the part, we used a gargle of sage tea, alum, rose leaves, and loaf sugar.

As

The mallows and fig may have been applied externally as a poultice or made into a gargle or tea. Buchan recommended figs in drink or gargle and suggested keeping "a roasted fig constantly in his mouth" to hasten discharge of pus from sores in the throat. As the following receipts show, poultices for a sore throat ranged from simple to outlandish. **38**

To Cure a Sore Throat tho a Quindsey

The flower of Holly Hawks [hollyhocks, one of the mallows]—boyle them in Water a good handfull—drink some of the water and bind the flower to the neck also. This cured a Horse that was given over.

Pk

Take a handful of hops, steep it in spirits, and apply a common funnel to the liquid. Let the patient apply the funnel to his throat and thereby absorb the steam. Let the hops be applied like a poultice.

SC

For a Sore Throat

Curds apply'd warm to the throat on the outside, the curd should be turned with sour buttermilk and for a gargle a hott Iron quenched in Water add to it.

Pk

For a bad soare throat,

Threw turnups in Water to a poultis then put a little Vinigar to them and apply it to the throat, also make a gargle of Vinigar and Water.

Sm

Plaister for a Sore Throat

a quarter of a pound of Mutton Suet taken from the Kidneys cut it in small peices put it in a Glazed Earthen pipkin to melt over the fire very slowly strain it to take out all the Skins & put it in the pipkin again with three ounces of unsalted Butter four ounces of Rosin & four oz & half of Yellow Bees wax keep stirring it till well melted & incorporated together then pour it in Gallipots for use spread it on a linnen Cloth to reach from Ear to Ear about three Inches wide change It in 24 Hours for a fresh one if very Bad in twelve Hours.

PD

Serious sore throat, especially resulting from abscessed tonsils, was alternately known as a quinsy. Swelling and breathing difficulty often accompanied this disorder. Keeping the throat warm was deemed of utmost importance, although methods of doing so varied. Buchan opined that exotic ingredients were unnecessary for throat poultices: "we do not look upon any of these to be preferable to a common poultice of bread and milk." [39] Nevertheless, in the case of serious illness, practitioners were likely to turn to drastic measures, as in the following receipts.

for the Quinsey

take Stalions dung fresh Stewed in Sweet wort or new Milk and thickened with Wheat Bran Make a poltis & aply it to the throat.

Al

A quinsey

Fresh Cow Dung fried in Hogs lard & applyed to the Throat by way of Poultice as it can be borne changing as it Cools.

PD

Quincy's *Pharmacopoeia Officinalis* of 1736 included not only cow and horse dung but also assorted other excrement for medicinal use. Buchan and Quincy both listed *album graecum* (dog's white dung) in common use for inflammations of the throat, although neither author assigned much credit to that cure. Quincy praised "stone-horse dung" as a remedy for respiratory inflammations. [40]

For a "relaxed uvula" or "when the palate of the mouth is down," a poultice to the crown of the head was common treatment. The uvula is the fingerlike extension of the soft palate hanging in the back of the mouth. A swollen ("relaxed" or "down") uvula results in difficulty in swallowing and general discomfort. Wesley recommended a simple cabbage-leaf poultice,[41] while the Allen manuscript detailed a more involved preparation of wilted cabbage or collard leaves spread with butter and aromatic spices:

To take up the pallet of the Mouth when it is Doun take a Cabbeth or Coiled Leaf Welt it by the fire and Spred it over with fresh Butter then Sprinkle on it Ginger and Nutmeg Made fine part or cut of the hear on the top of the head and Some What towards the Back part and then Lay on the plaster then take peach Cernel oil and anoint the Sides of the throat and under the jaw and Rub it up towards the Ears put Several Leaves on the top of the plaster.

Al

Fluxes, Laxes, Dysenteries, Colics

Flux, lax, and dysentery referred to spontaneous purging or diarrhea, while *colic* generally indicated abdominal pain or cramping. Gastrointestinal disorders were common in period sources, ranging from minor windy disorders (flatulence) and upset stomach to severe lead poisoning (dry gripes or dry bellyache) or serious epidemics such as typhoid fever (putrid malignant fever).

Lead-contaminated rum occasioned epidemics of abdominal pain in the South and the West Indies. Pewter household wares also contributed to the problem. As lead poisoning and its causes were recognized, the illness began to subside during the final quarter of the eighteenth century.[42]

When water made Asbury sick during his travels, he simply "took some pills, and drank chicken-broth, and mended." Many others died during epidemics "of a very bad type of dysentery," however. As might be expected, venesection was one of the first defenses when a backcountry settler "was suddenly attacked . . . by diarrhoea and cramps, and was very ill. After bleeding him the second time he

improved." [43] Other attempts at remedy typically included a combination of diet, depletion, and dooryard remedies:

> For a Purging
>
> First of all upon its first coming take a plenty of Chicken water. If it continues take a dose of Hippo if that don't stop it take a dose of Rhubarb and if it continues after that take the following decoction—Persimon roote, Yarrow, plantain, black-berry roots, Gumm leaves and a little red oak Bark boild one 3rd part away add a little brandy and sugar and drink it at discretion.
>
> Pk

As with fevers, a combination of purgatives and emetics was employed for internal distress. For example, ipecacuanha (hippo) was teamed with rhubarb in the preceding receipt or with emetic tartar and jalap in the following combination of treatments, which Lenoir took from *Lucas's Almanack* AD *1816:*

> A Receipt for the Flux
>
> Take of Emetic Tarter 10 grains. Epicacuana 20 grains Jolop 40 grains make them into 30 pills with honey & flour, the dose one pill three times a day; The diet should be chiefly of mutton & Chicken broth. When the flux attacks violently, a blister aplied over the pain is often useful and in such cases the use of the above pills should be preceeded by a gentle purge.
>
> Ln

Thompson's book of cures echoed the use of chicken broth. His receipt was taken from Wesley and was very close to Buchan's advice as well. His use of the term *cholera morbus* may refer to a form of food poisoning or other diarrheal disorder rather than to the epidemic Asiatic cholera, which seems not to have spread worldwide until after 1817.[44]

> Cholera Morbus—Boil a chicken skin an hour in two gallons of water and drink of this till the vomiting ceases—if the pain is very severe, stupe the belly with flannels dipt in spirits and water.
>
> Tm

When nursing a friend stricken by fever with vomiting, a Moravian man was pleased to acquire chickens and butter but bemoaned having "no bread with which to make a proper broth."[45] Butter was also considered curative for diarrhea.

> Recipt for the Dysentry
>
> Take new churned butter without Salt, & just skimming of the curdy part when melted over a clear fire, give to spoon full of the clarified

remainder twice or thrice within the day to the person affected.—This has never failed to make almost an instant Cure, even when administered to persons at the point of Death, and who were solemnly resign'd to that last cure of every malady, by their Physician's farewell sentence.

Sm (loose sheet)

Horry recommended an abbreviated version of this receipt "For the Bloody Flux." Schmidt added the following alternative dysentery cure, which resembled Wesley's instructions:

Take a large Apple, pick out the core, & fill the cavity with honey-comb, (the honey being strained out) cover it with hot ashes, till roasted soft, then mix it together, and eat it all at once, it commonly gives ease in about half an hour.

Sm

Two additional kitchen cures came from the anonymous PD manuscript. The first was credited to "Mrs Myddleton" and the second to a "Dutch Physician," suggesting both English and German use of egg yolk and brandy against diarrhea.

For a Lax

The yolk of an egg a Gill of Brandy mixed with loaf sugar half a Nutmeg grated take a Teaspoonful after every stool—

PD

Receipt for a flux—

Two new laid eggs poached in Brandy at going to Bed drink three spoonfuls of the Brandy after them—

PD

When, in 1795, a traveler near Linville Creek in western North Carolina found himself "very Bad with a Lax . . . [he] Vometed . . . Try'd to get some Tea But . . . got a Tinfull of milk scalded with Pepper and Drank it." [46] Lenoir detailed a related western North Carolina remedy:

Do. for the Flux in a man

Take 2 Quarts of new milk from the Cow, put in one handfulls Sage Three pods red pepper & boil it to almost 3 pints then put in a pint and gill of best old brandy when warm of the fire mix it well and give three Table spoon fulls for every three hours in the day-Give them to Eat Bread & fresh butter with strong Coffey with a little brandy in it.

Ln

"A Contrast between wind and blood accations the Collic." This curious statement accompanied Lenoir's advice that garlic was good for colic. It is not clear whether Lenoir was writing about flatulence in horse, human, or both. The PD manuscript followed earlier herbal traditions, suggesting powdered sweet fennel and anise seeds for windy disorders. Ginseng was considered another excellent remedy:

> Mr John Berrey[?] Informs me that the Tops & Leaves of Jansang is a Exalent Remadey for the Wind collock & that he had none Numbars cuard by it and Never node it faile when Tryd it is to be made into a Teay.
>
> Bl

> Cure for the Colick
>
> Take one Ounce of Black-Snake-root one ounce Ginsang Beaten very fine one Ounce Oak Jerusalam Seed and Stir them in a Quart of Honey in Brass or Copper till it gets about as thick as Shoe-wax and take a pill of it every night (about as big a[s] a nutmeg).
>
> Ln

Additional simple herbal remedies for gastrointestinal distress abounded in these sources: an infusion of carduus benedictus "flavourd at pleusure with Sinamond" (Al); "Cross vine tea" or "Dogwood buds or buttons that grows like the bud" (Tm); marshmallow roots in decoction with peach roots (particularly for "the Bilious Cholic") (Hr); peach bark decoction with molasses in brandy (Ln); rose leaf (petal) tea with tincture of bark (SC); or wild rose roots with oak, persimmon, and sweet gum bark. Lenoir advised, "Boil them all together and make it your constant drink."

Milk-based herbal decoctions were similarly employed in cases of dysentery—utilizing pomegranate peel (Sm), mullein leaves (Ln), or "Fern. A good handful of the brown wool or hair from the stems cooked in milk and drunk" (Ru). Perhaps the woolliness of the fern and mullein contributed to the cure.

> Cure for Lax, by Elish Jones of Lincoln Cy. 26 May 1807
>
> Take of the sort of Mullen that doth not go to seed, three buds taking about 4 or 5 of the top leaves with each bud & boile them in a pint of new milk to half a pint & drink it—& if it should bind too hard work it off with salts.
>
> NB sd E. J. said that he had been afflicted with a Lax for 6 months & that cured him that he had no pain, nor Stool, for 2 days that his Brother had long been afflicted with a lax & a dead flat worm came from him 11 feet long—but his Brother did not drick the mullen tea.
>
> Ln

Another group of treatments for diarrhea involved cork burnt to ashes, a remedy possibly inspired by the Doctrine of Signatures. Lenoir copied such a receipt from the *Raleigh Star* in 1816.

> Cure for the Colic,—and Cholera Morbus
>
> Take a good Soft Cork, burn it thoroughly, when it has ceased to blaze powder it on a plate Separating any little hard particles that may remain a Table-spoon-full of this powder mixed with molasses and water, or any other liquid will generally be sufficient, but being absolutely harmless the dose may be enlarged or repeated at pleasure—
>
> Ln

Cork ashes in wine for a bloody flux had been penned into a Charleston book (PD) a half century earlier. Wesley's 1804 edition suggested a liniment containing burnt cork for the piles.

The fact that fluxes (diarrhea) and fevers often occurred together led to a body of common treatment that included Peruvian bark and other bitters along with cathartics and emetics. Horry listed an infusion of bark, magnesia, and brandy in water for "a weak stomach" and castor oil or ippo (ipecacuanha) for "a complaint in the Bowels or Dysentry."

Byrd wrote of chewing rhubarb to keep fluxes under control and believed that travelers' medical supplies should include "Peruvian-Bark, Rhubarb and Hipocoacanah in case they might be taken with fevers or Fluxes." Asbury evidently agreed, reporting himself "seized with a severe flux, which followed me eight days. . . . I made use of small portions of rhubarb; and also obtained some good claret, of which I drank a bottle in three days, and was almost well." [47] The Schmidt receipt book listed rhubarb in two flux remedies, and Ann Cameron included rhubarb bitters in her housekeeping book, begun in 1816. This preparation may have served for both fever and stomach disorder.

> Rhubarb Bitter
>
> Take 2 oz of rhubarb, 1 oz of camomile flowers, 4 [?] roots of ginger, a little orange peal put into 1 quart of French Brandy, let the vessel remain open 1 or 2 days, to extract the strength of the ingredients, then cork it, and it is fit for use. 1 teaspoonful 3 times a day for a child 6 years of age.
>
> Cm

> A certain cure fore the Cholick, a flux, the Gripes, from what Cause whatsoever, Indigestion or any other Disorder in the Stomach. . . .
>
> Take Myrrh, Cochineal, Rhubarb, Hieiapicra of each an Once, bruise them that Virtues may be the more perfectly extracted and put them into a Gall. of double distilled Anniseed Water, French Brandy or

Rum, and after they have lain three Days the Liquor is fit for use, but the longer it continues on the Druggs the better. Take a small Wine Glass in any of the above Cases and (if need be, which never Know but once in the Colick) repeat it in about half an hour. Note, Anniseed Water is better to put the Ingredients into, than french Brandy, & french Brandy is preferable to Rum.

Sm

to be given in the flux

take 15 grains of Hippo a lump of Sugar mix it with a little warm water, and take half of it in the morning and the other a hour after: then give the day following 15 grains Rhubarb put it in a paper and lay it near the fire to tost till the paper turns brown then pour half a Tea cup of warm Water on it and give half at a time and the remaining part 2 hours after.

Sm

In cases of severe abdominal pain and disorder an opium preparation such as laudanum or paregoric was added to the treatment. Lenoir reported a personal experience. Elixir paregoric "Cured me of a Severe Colic at Statesville Novr 1814. . . . I had a pain in my Grine [groin] in place not bigger than the end of my finger, Dr. Guy thought it might be some thing like the Gravil—but I think it was the Cholic."

Syringe Set for Administering a Clyster (Enema), brass, circa 1800.
Courtesy Waring Historical Library, Medical
University of South Carolina, Charleston.

The Clyster. Fig. 12 "Represents the Machinery commonly used with the German and Dutch People for injecting Clysters. AA the Bladder of Liquor, which is large enough to hold a Pint; BB the Pipe of Bone or Ivory to transmit the Liquor into the Intestines." From Laurence Heister, *A General System of Surgery in Three Parts* (London, 1757).
Courtesy Health Sciences Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Horry collected receipts combining castor oil or senna and salts with laudanum. One particularly detailed treatment, learned from a Dr. Gibbs in 1772, recommended manna and tartar emetic followed by tincture of opium in mint tea:

> For the Flux
>
> Disolve one ounce of Manna in 1/2 a pint of warm Water and strain it. add to it Eight grains of Tartar Emetic. Give to a grown Person two tablespoonfulls every two hours untill it works them freely downwards, and continue untill it changes the appearance from Fluxy to large yellowish color'd Stools. Ye dose may be increas'd or decreas'd agreeable to the strength and circumstances of the Patient. Plenty of strain'd gruel must be given to assist the Operation. at night 20 or thirty drops of laudanum may be given if gryp'd. The doses may be repeated every second day. Give the laudanum in Mint tea.
>
> Hr

Salt in vinegar was commonly given for diarrhea (SC). The Schmidt manuscript included two variations of that remedy.

Cure for the Dysentary

To one gill of fountain water dissolve as much common table salt as it will take up or melt; add to it one gill of the best vinegar. Of this mixture, give, once in a quarter, or half an hour, to grown persons or to children, such doses, as the stomach will bear without puking, if a considerable proportion of the Essence of peppermint be added it will be a valuable improvement of the medicine.

Sm

A Maryland manuscript circa 1804 listed for dysentery and fever loaf sugar and sharp vinegar simmered in a pewter vessel, covered with a pewter lid, and stirred with a pewter spoon. Because old pewter contained lead, which would have reacted with the vinegar and passed into the solution, the reasoning behind this remedy is unclear, for one type of colic was recognized as resulting from lead poisoning. Wesley recommended taking fresh melted butter for "cholic from the fumes of lead." [48] Frederic William Marshall recorded a safer way to employ a pewter vessel in medicine:

Against the Cholic

Put a Pewter Dish upon a Chafing dish, & whilst it is warming rub it in the Inside with an Onion of Garlick. Then wrap it into a Napkin & apply the Garlick Side to the bare Belly. It soon relieveth & the Smell thereof will also be gone out of the Bed before the next Night.

Ml

There seems to be a distinct relationship between Marshall's cure for the colic and Eliza Smith's use of garlic for the bloody flux. Her treatment involved laying a rag dipped into warm garlic juice on the navel. This application was to be repeated several times, although Smith boasted, "it cures immediately."[49]

Mechanical methods were suggested for cleansing a disordered bowel by washing or by scouring, as in the following instruction, which Lenoir copied from a 1816 Raleigh newspaper. The receipt is related to one found among the sympathetic cures of John George Hohman's *Long Lost Friend*.[50]

Cure for the Flux

English Pipes beaten to the Size of half a grain of wheat, (if Coarser, no matter) half a Tablespoon-full every three or four hours Moisten them, put them in the mouth then take a swallow or two of water—they are Easy Swallowed the Act mechanically by Scraping the mucus from off the intestines.

Ln

Alternately, the bowel was cleansed by clystering. We would recognize a clyster (clister, glyster) as an enema. The clystering solution might have been administered by a pewter syringe or pipe. In the absence of that instrument, a bladder with reed or quill sufficed. John C. Gunn described the old-style clyster pipe as follows: "take a beef or hog's bladder, which has been blown up and suffered to dry; and after inserting and fastening a short hollow reed, or a quill in it, cut off at both ends of the barrel, you are to put the glyster [solution] itself into the bladder. The end of the reed or quill . . . is now to be covered with some oil or lard, and gently put up the fundament about an inch . . . and the sides of the bladder squeezed together gradually, so as to throw its contents as far as possible up the bowels." [51]

For a Moravian Bethabara resident in 1787, "The clogging continued, and the clyster had to be used. . . . he improved rapidly." More details were given in the case of another man "very ill with clogged bowels," who was "advised . . . to put camomile and a little tobacco in the clyster."[52]

Chamomile and tobacco were commonly included in clystering solutions; although plain-water or saltwater solutions were considered good. Lenoir reported this dramatic method in 1807:

> Judge McCay's Cure for the Cholic
>
> He says that Dr. Harris has become famous for Curing the cholic, & the way he does it, he has a large Pot of water prepared & Clisters the patient till he washes him out quite clean—he says he don't know that he puts any thing in the water, perhaps may put a little Salt. he says a negroe fellow of his, was Clistered till he took a Strangery (or some such name) and the Docker took some cold water & put about an equal quantity of Spirits in it, & wet a Towel with it & wraped round the fellows loyns & he evacuated immediately the greatest quantity of Urine he ever saw any person.
>
> Ln

Tar was well known and much debated in medicine during this period. Most commonly recommended for coughs and skin problems, tar was also suggested for colic. An 1818 visitor from Halifax gave Lenoir the following receipt, which, as is typical in his manuscript, mingles cures for livestock and humans:

> To Cure the Colic
>
> put a Gill of Tar in a quart of Brandy shake it well & take a Teaspoon full—Mr. Burgis also says that a quart of strong Tan Ouze will cure a horse of the Colic (or grubs one) & also that a pill of Tar will cure a sick fowl.
>
> Ln

Worms

Worms were recognized as one cause of colic. As in the previous receipt, Tennessean John Sevier's remedy for worms utilizes tar to dose both humans and livestock.

> Take a single handful of white shoemake root bark, boil it in water till it is strong & little more than a spoonfull then take out the root and add a spoon of tarr & a spoonfull of honey & mix it well together, then put to it a pint of new milk and Drench the horse—a sure cure for worms—a sixth part for a child—or half as much for a grown person, or nearly as much as for a horse—proved a Certain cure. [53]

Doddridge reported, "The diseases of children were mostly ascribed to worms, for the expulsion of which a solution of common salt was given. The dose was always large. . . . scrapings of pewter spoons . . . sulphate of iron, or green copperas, was a third remedy for worms." Doddridge also noted that the doses remembered from his youth were larger than he considered safe.[54] Worm remedies closely resemble those given for other intestinal upsets, especially the use of a salt solution and of pewter. The two anonymous South Carolina lowcountry manuscripts (PD, SC) included methods for combating worms with salt solutions, and this North Carolina cure combined salt with copperas and molasses:

> Cure for the worms in Children
>
> Colo. John Armstrong of Raleigh says that Mr. Moore in Fayetteville had a child about 6 years old that was gave out by the Dockters to die with worms, they were crawling out its Nose—They gave it a little salt water & then some coporas beaten and sifted thro. fine Muslin & put in Molosses—& it killed the worms & saved the Child—
>
> Ln

The common intestinal roundworm, ascaris, may be vomited into the mouth and exit from the nostrils, as described above. The much smaller hookworm was a widespread threat to health as well, often causing serious anemia. This condition was not generally recognized as resulting from worms, however, because the hookworm had not yet been discovered.[55]

Jerusalem oak, tobacco, and pinkroot were foremost among botanical cures for worms. After taking Jerusalem oak seed, the three-year-old son of a Scottish minister in Virginia "voided in four days, 119 Worms." Two days later, "The child voided the 120th Worm."[56] And in South Carolina, Horry infused Jerusalem oak seed, red bark (cinchona), and senna to be given for worms in children. Tobacco seed was similarly used. In 1796 a Lincoln County, North Carolina, man, James Wilson, shared the following worm remedies in a letter to his brother:

> the way we used tobaca seed for the worms is to take the full of a sewing thimble in honey or anything he can take it in the morning or any time you can get him to take it—you may continue it for a week or longer. [57]

Native pinkroot was a highly acclaimed American botanical vermifuge, serving in coastal towns as a valuable trade commodity. Wilson suggested giving calomel and jalap every evening along with pinkroot tea "for a constant drink," adding the caution to "allways remember to give your children no cold water and keep them off the cold ground and out of the night air." He continued,

> the best thing ever we got was Carolina pink root, but if it is not good it is worth nothing, the way we used the root is to get one ounce of the root and 3d. pence worth of sena, take the one half of the root and half of the sena draw them in a pint of water pour in the water boiling or you may stew it some time to draw the strength out of it then let him take a tea cup full in the morning, before dinner and at night or as much as you can get him to take if he will not take so much as above, afterwards you may draw the other half and use it in the same manner, while he is using it he must use no milk.

Horry's receipt book detailed the preparation of "Worm Powders" from dried powdered pinkroot, jalap, and calomel, and Horry personally directed the gathering of pinkroot and other native simples.[58]

Cathartics were considered necessary in expelling worms. For worms in children Horry suggested aloes and orange peel in rum, Robert Rose gave his son mercury and rhubarb "for a Worm Collick,"[59] and Schmidt's choice was sulfur:

> for Worms at night
>
> take 2 teaspoons of sulpher mix it with a little milk or molasses, in case nither of thise can be got a little warm water and sugar, but mix the sulpher first with a few drops of spririts or wein, then give the patient a dish of tea and let them go to bed and not expose themself, this dose is for a Child of 10 or 12 years old.
>
> Sm

Buchan considered oily, sweetened clysters "very efficatious in bringing away the short round worms called ascarides."[60] He would thus have approved Thompson's course of treatment, perhaps adding an oil to the clyster.

> Cure for worms—Sweeten milk with Sugar and give it as a glister, then give any kind of good bitters and it will Drive them Down to the sweet and of course cary them out of the bowels.
>
> Tm

Although fevers, dysentery, smallpox, putrid sore throat, consumption, and worms seem to have little in common when considered within the twentieth-century framework of knowledge, eighteenth-century medical thought generally grouped these disorders and treated them similarly because of their shared symptoms. A fever coupled with respiratory and/or gastrointestinal upset might accompany any of the collection of disorders included in this chapter. A readiness to be bled, blistered, vomited, and purged for such symptoms is well documented among primary sources. Barks, snakeroots, and bitters figured prominently in medical preparations. Common among kitchen cures were chicken soup, eggs, butter, and milk. It is no wonder that traditional treatments overlapped for the multiple symptoms of these life-threatening complaints, which were often difficult to diagnose.

Many of the acute infectious diseases included in this chapter were not American in origin but were introduced by European adventurers and settlers and by African slaves. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, aboriginal Americans seem to have been relatively free of acute infectious diseases as a result of their long-term isolation, their limited and scattered populations, and the harsh climate. Their descendants were therefore extraordinarily vulnerable to the new contagions that arrived from Europe and from Africa. The year 1492 brought the dawn of infectious disease to America. Smallpox, measles, and a form of malaria (vivax) arrived with the earliest European explorers. An invading army of other diseases had arrived from Europe by the mid-1700s, including whooping cough, diphtheria, typhus, scarlet fever, influenza, and certain intestinal infections. These new contagious had a devastating impact on Native American populations. African slaves transported to America a more dangerous malaria (falciparum), yellow fever, and hookworm as well as yaws, guinea worm, and dysentery. These contagions ravaged Europeans as well as Indians, while the Africans possessed some resistance to the common diseases of their homeland. [61]

Thus, the toll from acute diseases was highest among Native Americans and also quite high among European settlers. Those who survived childhood diseases and recurring epidemics might live to develop a variety of other disorders. Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans alike were troubled with common chronic ailments.

Chapter 7—
Chronic Internal Complaints

Those persons who successfully ran the gauntlet of childhood diseases and epidemics were likely to live long enough to experience such chronic afflictions as rheumatism, gout, dropsy, and kidney disorders. Anyone, young or old, might occasionally require a remedy for painful muscles or joints. Early sources generally grouped together these categories of disorders.

Aches and Pains

Among treatments for various aches and pains, domestic healers favored warm poultices, salves, and liniments:

For Sprains or Strains

Take of Stale bread crumbled and Camomile flowers each one handful, moisten it with Claret to the consistence of a poultice, make it warm and apply it fresh every three hours.

Hr

for an old Sore Leg take parsnips pounded Boil in water til Soft thicken it with Wheat Bran make a poltis & aply it.

Al

A Very good Ointment for rubing Pains

Fill a small Iron pot with hart Snakeroot, put some Water to it and let it stew two or three hours, then add about two quarts of Hogs laird and let it stew till the Water is dried away, then strain it.

Hr

For a sprain or Bruise approved

A pint of rectified spirits of Wine & two ounces of Camphire put into a quart Bottle & filld up with ox's Gall—Rub the sprain or Bruise before the fire twice a day for a considerable time.

PD

William Buchan endorsed camphorated spirits of wine for strains and gave instructions for preparing a camphorated oil for rubbing painful limbs in cases of rheumatism. [1] John Thompson's commonplace book contains a version of Buchan's receipt for combining camphor and Florence oil in a mortar. William Lenoir chose red pepper as a stimulating ingredient for joint pain:

> Pain in the Hip
>
> To 2 spoonfulls of hogs lard, 2 spoonfulls pulverized red pepper & 2 quarts chamber Rye[2] & boil away till it becomes a Salve & apply it to the part affected.
>
> Ln

John Quincy's *Pharmacopoeia Officinalis* included earthworms among medicinal ingredients. Although he agreed with the practice of including worms in snail waters for lung and kidney complaints, Quincy said of the oil made of them, "it does not answer the Pretentions of many in Arthritic Pains, and is not much in use."[3] Harriott Horry evidently held a different opinion:

> For a Weakness in the Foot, Ancles, or any part
>
> Take a large handfull of long brown Worms (such as you usually use as bait for fishing) put them into a pint of Sweet Oil and let them fry or stew till the worms are quite crisp, then strain it and anoint the weak part frequently with the oil.
>
> Hr

Common treatment for pain in the limbs was application of fat from various indigenous animals. Joseph Doddridge outlined this tradition: "Most of the men of the early settlers of this country were affected with the rheumatism. For relief from this disease, the hunters generally slept with their feet to the fire. The oil of rattlesnakes, geese, wolves, bears, raccoons, ground-hogs, and polecats, was applied to swelled joints and bathed in before the fire."[4]

The references to such treatments were widespread. Peter Kalm noted the use of fox grease for rheumatic pains. William Byrd chose "Rattlesnake's Oyl" to ease the pain of gout. And in the North Carolina Moravian settlements, Christian Gottlieb Reuter reported, "Many use the Snake as medicine. First Rattlesnake fat melted, and used as a salve for pain in the limbs. Second: the skin stripped off and used for the same purpose." Reuter also wrote that skunk fat was thought "very useful as a salve for crushed or dislocated limbs."[5]

Rheumatism

In addition to the general methods for counteracting aches and pains out-lined previously, numerous specifics for rheumatism occurred throughout the

manuscripts. *Rheumatism* was the general term for pain and inflammation of the joints and muscles, including arthritis and gout.

Buchan and John Wesley published various courses of treatment for rheumatism, gout, and related complaints. Bleeding, purging, and promoting perspiration were considered appropriate. A number of published remedies involved guaiacum, mustard, and/or sulfur. These sudorifics (sweat inducers) were also well represented among the manuscript sources studied.

Gum guaiacum was extolled for painful joints and limbs, as in chronic rheumatism. Of the manuscripts from the South Carolina lowcountry, seven rheumatism remedies contained guaiacum. This exotic ingredient was not found in receipts collected from the backcountry settlements, although guaiacum was listed in 1817 in Dr. Samuel Vierling's estate inventory from Salem, North Carolina.

> For the Rheumatism
>
> Take one Ounce of Gum Guiacum, powder it very fine, and take as much as will lie on an English Shilling in a glass of Water night and morning. Repeat the same quantity every Spring and Fall, tho' you may be free from pain, and it will prevent its returning.
>
> Pk, Hr

> Rheumatism
>
> a level Teaspoonful of Mustard in a half glass of gin or Whiskey every morning for four days successively—afterwards—20 grains of gum guac powderd in honey or molasses for four mornings—then 1 1/2 Teaspoonful of the Tincture of Gum Guac in a wine glass of water for 4 mornings—Keep the Patient from taking Cold.
>
> SC

Although this lowcountry treatment teamed mustard with guaiacum, on the frontier, mustard alone was used, according to Lenoir's account of a cure performed by Colonel Alexander Martin:

> Likewise he says that he hath Cured 2 or 3 of his Negroes that have been rendered useless By the Rheumatism for a year or two; (agreeable to a prescription he got at Phila.)
>
> Take half pint of Mustard seed beaten to powder & put in a Gallon of wine & give a Common Dram Glass ful 3 times a day—NB by experience he finds that Cyder answers as well as wine.
>
> Ln

Brimstone or sulfur was widely available and widely used. A Tennessean took the following remedy from Wesley:

To cure [rheumatism] flower of sulpher with honey in equal quantities, take three spoonfuls at night and two in the morning and one afterward, morning and evening til cured, this succeeds oftener than any Remedy I have found.

Tm

Horry echoed the use of sulfur and honey as a simple remedy that "has proved very efficacious in chronic rheumatism." She also listed brimstone water as particularly good for rheumatism. This draught was prepared by pouring boiling water on powdered sulfur and allowing it to stand for four or five days.

Lenoir alluded to an external use of sulfur to relieve pains in joints in a note appended to the following receipt. His medical notes also included both internal and external use of products of the pine—turpentine and lightwood (resinous pinewood)—against rheumatism and similar ailments. Wesley suggested tar water, another pine derivative, to be taken morning and evening. [6]

Cure for Pains

Mrs. Dobson says that Mrs. Humphreys was for a year that she could not Scarcly walk with pains in her feet and ancles which were constantly swelled and sometimes appeared spotted.

She was advised to take an ouce of Casteel Soap, and Ounce of Spirits Turpentine, and put them into half a pint Rye whiskey (Rum will do) and rub the part affected 2 or 3 times a day & she did so & got well immediately, & Mr. Jones got cured of pains this same way, NB. it appears to me like there ought to be Brimstone with the soap & spirits of Turpentine but if it was so I omitted it in my memorandum Feby 1810.

Ln

Cure for Rheumatism—

Colo. Koons says a woman on New River had been a long time helpless with the Rheumatism, and was advised to have fat Lightwood knots split up fine & boiled in a pint of new milk till it came to half a pint and drink as much of it as her Stomac would bear & by the Experiment she got entirely well in a short time.

(NB Suppose the same to be good for a horse).

Ln

Another popular cure combined garlic and gum ammoniac into a pill. "The famous American Receipt for the Rheumatism" appeared in John Tobler's *South Carolina and Georgia Almanack* for 1777. This almanac or some similar source furnished an entry in the personal commonplace books of both Dorothea Christina Schmidt and Horry.

The famous American Receipt for the Rheumatism

Take of Garlic two Cloves, of gum armoniac one Drachm, blend them by bruising them together, make them into two or three bolusses with fair Water and swallow them one at night, and one in the Morning, drink while taking this Receipe, Sassafras tea, made very strong, so as to have the teapot filled with chips, This is generally found to banish the Rheumatism and even Contractions of the joints in a few times taken.

Sm

Horry's abbreviated version of this receipt was followed by a variation combining garlic with guaiacum (rather than gum ammoniac) in pills to be taken morning and night.

Related to the recommendation of strong sassafras tea for rheumatism is the following novel receipt. Following this entry, Lenoir noted that "a lad took 19 drops and it had like to have killed him."

another Cure for Rheumatism

by Mr. McCay from Iredell County at Fort Defiance 22 Decr 1810 Take Sassafras Roots Bruise them or cut them small and fill a still full of them with water and Cover it—put fire enough under the Still to warm the water and not make it boil for a night and in the Morning Still it off till it runs many Gallons in a pot,—And at the bottom of the Pot you will find something settled resembling melted lead which will run thro any wooden Vessell like Aquefortis for pains—take about 5 drops of that inwardly two or three times a day And annoint the place effected with some more of it.

Ln

The oil of sassafras applied externally for rheumatic discomfort was considered "remarkable for its power of shifting the pain from its original seat"; however, Benjamin Smith Barton noted that this drastic treatment was "not always to the advantage of the patient" and should be used with caution. [7] In the backcountry settlements various alternative herbal cures were recommended.

Take Jinson Root as much as both hands will Grasp 4 inches long boil it in two Quarts of water to the consumtion of one quart then mix therewith one Quart of rum and take three times in a day a Small dram to Cure the Rhumatism.

Al

May 1806 Mrs. J. Patton says she recd. great Benefit by Dittiny Tea—for Rheumatism—

Ln

Mr. Goodwin (the Comptroller) says Prickley Ash is good for Reumetism—

Ln

Herbal treatments for rheumatism were administered not only internally but also externally. Two interesting aromatic therapies appear in South Carolina lowcountry sources:

Rheumatism

Sprinkle one ounce of Juniper Berries in a Warming pan of Coals & warm th Bed with it.

PD

For the Rhumatism

The oil of Rosemary, oil of Anniseeds of each four drops smoaked in a pipe of tobacca or Rosemary.

Pk

A variety of external applications were recommended for rheumatism in personal memoranda and in the medical guides of the day. Many were simple kitchen physic, as illustrated in the following receipts.

For Rheumatism—

Cabbage leaves applied constantly; as soon as they become wiltered fresh ones to be put in their place—the hard parts to be taken off as is usual in Blisters—

SC

Cure for Rheumatism

Capt Marke Hardin says a great Cure has been performed by amersing a man in Still Slop that had tryed many other experiments to Cure the Rheumatism.

Ln

Still slop was the residue remaining in a distillation pot after alcohol and other volatile components had been removed.

Two common treatments for discomfort and swelling were readily available. Cow's-heel broth or wool served to warm and soothe afflicted parts.

to Restore Strength after Rheumatism

Wash in a Strong Broth Made of Cow heels.

Al

This recommendation echoes Wesley's *Primitive Physick*. Whether used externally or internally, a broth of cow heels was widely considered restorative in rheumatism, dropsy, and various other infirmities. [8] To prevent rheumatism, the Thompson manuscript advises, as does Wesley, "wear washed wool under the feet."

Gout

Because gout may be considered a type of rheumatism, it is not surprising that applications of warm wool were recommended for both conditions. This plaster was considered curative rather than simply preventive.

> For the Gout
>
> Take half a pound of new Carded Wool Warm it by the fire then wrap up the part affected over this tye a Napkin that has been dippd in Melted Wax let it be Cold In twenty four Hours it will ease the most violent pain by a great Sweat if you see Cause you may repeat fresh Wool but well Warmed when you take off the Bees wax & Wool wrap the part in flannel for fear of Cold.
>
> PD

This treatment agreed with Buchan's description of the method by which the people of Lancashire "discharged the gouty matter through induced perspiration. They wrap a great quantity of [wool] about the leg and foot affected, and cover it with a skin of soft dressed leather. . . . The wool which they use is generally greased, and carded or combed. They chuse the softest which can be had, and seldom or never remove it till the fit be entirely gone off."[9]

Herbal infusions and decoctions were also used to treat gout. Tansy was considered preventive as well as curative.[10] The following receipt appears to have been widely shared among Charleston-area women. Horry's abbreviated variation suggested tansy in brandy or wine, although the version used by her mother, Eliza Pinckney, utilized wormwood.

> for violent pains in the Stomach even to the Gout
>
> A handful of Garden Tansy boild in a quart of strong Mountain Wine—strain it off to a person in a violent pain give a small tea Cup full [noted approved].
>
> PD

> For the Gout—taken from part of an advertisement
>
> The Herb to be used is comon Wormwood. The flowers and upper leaves are to be strip'd from the stalk, and upon a handful of these is to be pour'd a pint of Boiling Water; this is to stand twelve hours, and them be pour'd off, and a quarter of a pint is to be taken an hour

before dinner and five hours after. It is to be continued regularly for sometime and in this case as also in want of appetite and other disorders of the Stomach will make those very happy who shall use it.

Pk

Proper regimen was recognized as an important factor in gout. Avoiding rich foods and strong spirits was stressed, as were going early to bed and avoiding night studies. As Wesley wrote, "the grand medicine will be temperance and exercise." [11]

Dropsy

Historically, *dropsy* was synonymous with *edema,* or retention of fluid. Dropsy most commonly resulted from congestive heart failure, although other possible causes were liver or kidney failure.

The terms *anasarca* and *ascites* for swelling of the feet and ankles and of the belly, respectively, were commonly employed in early domestic medical guides. Old herbal traditions suggested juniper berries, broom, horseradish, mustard, squills, or tea leaves as the first line of offense against such dropsical complaints. Each of those botanical remedies figured in southern manuscripts. When purgative and diuretic medicines did not relieve the distress, surgical procedures were undertaken. In scarification of feet and legs or tapping of the abdomen, incisions were made to allow excess fluids to drain from among the tissues or from the abdominal cavity.[12]

Dropsy

This cured a Woman of a Dropsy who had been tapped many times Broom berries or rather call them the seeds which are in the Broom pods gathered ripe the beginning of August let them be roasted highly as you use them—grind or beat half an ounce of them & put three or four Coffee berries with them—boil it as Coffee well boiled—drink it for your Breakfast till well half an oz makes 2 Coffee Cups.

PD

This manuscript author included an alternative draught of broom ashes steeped in Rhenish wine. George Fisher's *The Instructor; or, The Young Man's Best Companion* (1797) suggests including both broom ashes and mustard seed in the white-wine infusion. Wesley recommended first trying a coffeelike beverage brewed from roasted juniper berries and then a decoction of butcher's broom.[13] Respected Moravian leader Frederic William Marshall noted that an infusion of juniper berries and roots "Against Dropsy in the Breast . . . after a week's use gave . . . Ease."

Buchan's basic diuretic infusion for the dropsy was prepared as follows: "Take juniper-berries, mustard seed, and horseradish, of each half an ounce, ashes of

broom half a pound; infuse them in a quart of Rhenish wine or strong ale for a few days." [14] From dissimilar sources, the two following diuretic doses fit well within traditional treatment. The first, for an internal preparation, is from an eastern North Carolina mid-eighteenth-century memorandum, while the second reflects early nineteenth-century domestic medicine in the western part of the state.

> The following Cure for ye Dropsy having been approved of is here inserted
>
> Take sixteen large nutmegs, eleven spoonfuls of Broom Ashes dried & burnt in an oven, an ounce & half Mustard Seed bruised, an handful of Horse Radish Scraped; all to be put in a Gallon of Strong mountain Wine, & to Stand three or four days.
>
> Mc
>
> Cure for the Dropsey; taken out of an Almanac at Capt. John Coxes 1808
>
> Put into a Stone or Earthen Jugg, a gallon of stale sound Cider, together with a Double-hand-full of Parsley-roots & tops cut fine, an handfull of Scraped horse-radish, two tablespoon-fulls of Brused Mustard seed, half an ounce of Oxymell of quills [squills] and one Ounce of Juniper berries. The liquid is to be kep warm by the fire for twenty four hours to be often agitated and then strained for use—Dose for an adult half a wine glass full three times a day on an empty Stomach the dose may be increased if necessary. After the water shall be discharged, the Patient should use moderate exercise, subsist on dry nourishing diet, and abstain from all Liquids as much as possible.
>
> Ln

Remedies for dropsy employed ashes of various herbs, including broom, tobacco, and grapevine. In each case, the lye from the ashes was infused into wine or hard cider for the patient to drink until cured.

> For a Dropsy
>
> Take 2 lb of Tobacco, burn it to Ashes & put them in three Quarts Boiling Water, which after Stiring & letting it stand for 12 Hours, Strain off the water & Put into a tin Kettle to boil til it is Reduced to about a Gill, then take it off & Put it on warm ashes upon which you'l Observe a white Froath keep it upon the Ashes untill the Liquid Substance is entirely Dryed up then pound the Essence and Sift it, & give a tea spoon full of it Evening & Morning in Sangaree.
>
> NB The Patient must abstain from any thing Salt or Greasy.
>
> Hr

Lenoir noted, "I saw an Acct. in a news-paper of a woman curing herself of

the Dropsey by eating Bohea Tea leaves." This may have been the same article found pasted into the PD commonplace book, which quoted from an 1805 issue of London's *Monthly Magazine:* "Infuse two large tea-cups full of the tea in about a quart of water; let the decoction be drank during the day, and the leaves eaten at short intervals." The article further testified that a sixty-two-year-old woman suffering from the dropsy was so thoroughly cured by this treatment that she "in the course of a week was able to go to hay-making." A similar receipt was marked *approved* in Ann Cameron's volume from central North Carolina.

All of the manuscripts containing the bohea tea cure date from the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when the idea of eating tea leaves to combat dropsy was apparently new. Quincy's 1736 *Pharmacopoeia Officinalis* listed bohea tea as "one of those things which Luxury has introduced into Diet; but it is yet a stranger in medicinal Prescriptions." The virtues of tea-drinking in general were being debated through the eighteenth century. A 1791 dispensatory stated, "The medical virtues attributed to these leaves are sufficiently numerous, though few of them have any just foundation." **15**

Wesley's *Primitive Physick* and Quincy's *Pharmacopoeia Officinalis* both described frankincense plasters applied to the pit of the stomach or to the wrists and soles of the feet in intermitting fevers, although Quincy added, "it does not seem fitted to answer any such important End."**16** The PD manuscript suggested such a plaster for dropsy:

> Another receipt for the Dropsy taken out of the papers—Take white Frankincense two penny worth spread it on Leather & apply it to the pit of the Stomach let it lie on till it drops off of itself—if not cured with one plaister repeat it but one frequently cures.
>
> PD

Among kitchen remedies, Wesley wrote of three spoonfuls of leek juice curing "a windy dropsy."**17** Marshall copied similar advice from a periodical into his notebook:

> Brittish Chronicle, a Gentleman being very poor by means of a Dropsy came accidently into an Alehouse, where the woman advised him to squeeze out a Leek, & take one Spoonful at a Time, in half a pint of new Milk, when the Stomach is used to it to encrease the Dose to 2, 3, &c Spoons full according as he shall find his Stomach can bear it, putting it always into half a Pint of Milk, which he did & was perfectly cured.
>
> Ml

Among other remedies for dropsy found in personal manuscripts were broad, hard beans (PD), milkweed root or chickweed (Cm), mullein (SC), and digitalis (Hr). The following receipt added several other herbs to the list, including poison oak.

Dropsy

Golden rod poison oak burdock root ground Ivy pine Tops garlick wormwood one hand Full of Each and one pint grape Vine ashes and some rusty iron To be boiled in Four Gallons hard cyder reduce it to three Galons and Take a wine Glass full morning noon and night the diet Dry biscuit.

Cm (loose sheet)

Three additional general remedies for swelling included iron. It is interesting to note that the four sources from which these receipts came were widely separated in time and place. Josiah Polk's casebook from the mid-1700s includes a combination of strong cider or vinegar, pine tops, new nails, bacon, and new tar that was said to "take down a Sweling." [18] From the South Carolina lowcountry, Horry suggested:

For a Swelling in ye Legs or Body, or any dropsical Complaint

Take ye roots of Star Grass and bruise them a little, fill a quart Bottle with it, and add to it 2 large spoon fulls of Filings of Iron & a pinch of Saffron, fill ye Bottle up with Madeira Wine, let it stand a Night, and give a glass three times a day.

Hr

The above receipt was simply steel wine (*vinum chalybeatum*) with star grass added. Steel wine was recommended with bitters "for all ill Habits that proceed from obstructed Viscera" as well as "an admirable good Medicine" in the greensickness (anemia).[19]

For a Dropsical Swelling

A pound of brown sugar & a pound of nails or a handful of iron [dust] of the black smith's shop, boiled in a qrt of vinegar to a thick syrup—To a grown person give a tablespoonful three times a day and to a child give a proportionate dose.

Al

Cure for the Dropsy—from the [Raleigh] Starr of 27 Septr. 1810

Take a chicken hen (a fat one is best) Pick and clean it well, take out the Intrails (liver excepted) and without washing the fowl put it into a mortar beat it untill it can be put into a Jugg (a Stone Jug is best) put it in, Cork the Jug well, then put it into a vessel of water, boil it three or four hours then Teem [pour off] the oil from the fowl, Take a Common wine glassfull of this Oil three times a day let the diet be hard Biscuit or something that is of a dry nature, make use of bitters

> occationally—it is said a man in Halifax County in Virginia was Cured by this simple medicine after he had been laped [tapped] five times and wan[ts] taping the 6th time, and hath appeared to be perfectly well for 12 months &c.—
>
> Ln

Francis Asbury also reported the use of bitter draughts in dropsical disorders while traveling his circuit during 1774: "As my legs, hands, and feet were swollen, it was thought proper to consult a physician, who sent me a certain mixture of bitters." [20]

The use of fever medicines such as bitters and frankincense plasters stemmed from the idea that dropsy was a fever because of the fast pulse that often typifies the condition (rapid pulse was a basic sign used to diagnose a fever).

Kidney Disorders

Lye from ashes was a common ingredient in remedies not only for dropsy but also for kidney complaints, because swelling due to excess fluids in the tissues sometimes accompanies kidney disease. The urinary tract complaint of most concern was certainly kidney stones. The Rachel Stout Allen and Archibald Maclaine manuscripts leaned especially heavily toward "stone and gravel" remedies. The Allen author drew extensively from Buchan's *Domestic Medicine,* while Maclaine recorded Joanna Stephens's "Discovery for the Cure of the Stone" from Eliza Smith's *Compleat Housewife*. Those two popular publications gave parallel views of mainstream traditions in treatment. The Allen manuscript offers a lively outline of Buchan's recommended regimen for gravel and stone:

> Bleeding good at ye Begaining Emollient Clysters if ye don't open ye Body ad alitel Salt & honey fomentations is good when ye gravel or Stone is Seperated from ye kidney and Lodges in the Ureter it will be proper besides ye fomentations to rub ye part with Sweet oil & to give gentle diaretics juniper water Marsh Mallows a teaspoonfull of ye Sweet Spirits of Niter a few drops of Laudanum now and then in ye drink & Exercise on horse Back.
>
> Al

Buchan declared that "soap-lees and lime-water are the most powerful medicines which have hitherto been discovered for the stone." Southern domestic practitioners apparently concurred with that notion. Buchan's oyster- and cockleshell limewater was convenient for coastal residents, but inland residents would likely have needed Stephens's instructions for burning the shells of eggs or of garden snails to procure lime. Otherwise, Stephens's methods closely resembled Buchan's, involving lime, lye prepared from ashes of various plants, honey, and herbs.[21]

Sweet spirit of niter and saltpeter were administered internally for urinary

tract distress. Added laudanum would have been helpful in dulling pain, whether or not the kidney stones were dissolved. [22]

> Adams' Solvent for Stone & Gravel
>
> Put into a quart Bottle 1 Gill of Gin 1 Table spoonful of Laudanum & 1 1/2 oz salt petre fill the bottle with boiling water when cold give a table spoonful every night.
>
> Hr

A widely recognized herbal tradition in treating kidney stones was followed by German, Scots-Irish, and English practitioners alike. Marshmallow and carrot seed were two of the simplest and gentlest medicines employed.

> Against the Stone & Gravel
>
> Mashd Mallows dry or green infused & drank like Tea or cold, is very good. But the strongest & most efficacious Remedy yet found out, is the wild Carrot, the Seed whereof is best to use infused hot or cold & may be sweetned if you like it with moist Sugar or Syrup of Mashd Mallows. That of the Garden Carrot is more luscious & not so efficacious.
>
> Ml

Buchan suggested for such decoctions "mild mucilaginous vegetables" such as linseed, licorice, and parsley and "greatly extolled" the *uva ursi* for kidney complaints. He deemed diet important in preventing and easing kidney stones, especially eating such foods as "promote the secretion of urine," including onions, leeks, turnips, spinach, or asparagus.[23]

In addition to Buchan, the Allen practitioner drew from Wesley's medical guide for kidney cures. This manuscript's recommendations include agrimony, chamomile, horsetail, or violet seed. Boiled parsnips in water was to be consumed morning and night with "no other drink all day for 6 weeks." The Allen manuscript also includes two of Wesley's treatments utilizing onions:

> In a Raging fit of Stone Beat Onions into a pulp & apply them as a poultis part to the Back & part to Each Groin it gives Speedy Ease in the most Racking pain or take Morning & Night a teaspoonfull of onions Calcined [burned] into White ashes in White Wine an ounce will often dissolve ye Stone.
>
> Al

The Doctrine of Signatures may have dictated the use of beans, especially kidney beans, for kidney problems. *The Compleat Housewife* followed the herbal tradition in distillation of beans in their pods with yarrow to prepare "A Stone Water." Ashes of bean shells mixed with lard or turpentine were reputed to be

effective when applied externally against pain in the back. [24] The Allen manuscript proposed internal doses infused from ashes of kidney bean shells for kidney stones:

> two tea Spoonfulls of ye ashes of Cidney Bean Shells & half a pint of hot Water at night pour it of in ye morning Warm & drink it Sweetened With honey dayly morning & night Every other fortnight.
>
> Al

The sources included several additional herbal remedies of special interest. The following simple remedy of onions and horsemint was attributed to "An African Negroe." A variation of this remedy was published in Thomas Johnson's *Every Man His Own Doctor,*[25] *and another was inscribed on an undated scrap among Cameron family papers with "I. W. Beneham" written on the reverse.*

> Cure for the gravel—take red onniuns and horse mint and beat them together in a morter and put a little water to it and Sqeese out the juice and Drink it Take one or two large onions and a Small Handfull of horsemint after the juice is first taken out put more water and squeeze it again—the Strength of two onions and a Handful of mint must be taken in a day.
>
> Tm

The use of blackberry and the related hawthorn to combat urinary tract distress was part of the same tradition as Stephens's choice of "hips and haws" to burn for lye for treating kidney stone. These receipts follow the older spirit of famous herbals, for eighteenth-century dispensatories had declared this family of fruits "now little used in any such Intention" although formerly "greatly recommended in many Authors for a wonderful Lithontriptic." Nicholas Culpeper extolled the hawthorn: "The Seeds in the Berries beaten to Powder being drank in Wine, are held singular good against the Stone" and dropsy.[26]

> For Stone or Gravel
>
> Take the Berries of Hawthorn dry them & beat them into powder & sift them through a very fine seive the patient may take a desert spoonful in a Glass of Wine in a Morn fasting or at noon if more agreeable & they will not be troubled with that disorder while they take it.
>
> PD

Horry recorded an especially agreeable treatment in which she also detailed an eighteenth-century method for preparing blackberry jelly.

> For the Stone and Gravel
>
> Take of blackberry jelly one teaspoonfull every night going to bed, it must be taken constantly and continued for some time. The Jelly must

be made with the berries full grown and red but just before they turn black, and to every pint of the juice add one pound of muscovado sugar and boil it quick till it jellies.

NB. This remedy cured one of my Servants of the Stone after suffering extremely with it for two years during which time she had a consultation of Physicians and every assistance they could procure.

Hr

Although eighteenth-century dispensatories listed ladies' bedstraw as "not now much in use," some of John Gerard's and Culpeper's earlier herbal traditions remained in domestic use, such as a honey-sweetened infusion of ladies' bedstraw contained in the PD manuscript. An unidentified "little Doctor Book" furnished a method for preparing an infusion of filbert (hazelnut) bark "to Break the Stone and Bring away the Gravel" (Al). Just as mustard remained much in use against dropsy, it was employed as diuretic in cases of strangury, or slow and painful urination (Pk). The Horry manuscript contains an exotic remedy from South America that was probably more readily available in Charleston than in the backcountry settlements: "For the Gravel take castile soap and Balsam Capivi mix it well together with honey and make into pills." [27]

Liver Ailments

Hepatitis and other liver diseases were generally lumped under the symptom name *jaundice*. Jaundice was listed in period sources along with the "fever which accompanied it . . . called 'the dumb ague' and the swelling in the region of the liver, 'the ague cake.'"[28]

An Excellent Receipt for the Jaundice

Take a vomit of Ippo in the Evening, then take a double handfull of Penny Royal, one handfull of Yarrow and one drachm of English Saffron boil'd in a pint of Milk mix't with a pint of Water till it comes to a Gill, then sweeten it with Honey, and give the same quantity for three days, keeping the Patient warm till the Operation is over.

Hr

Another

Take 2 raw Egg whites & yolks beat them up with spring water and take it fasting, repeat 1/2 the quantity at noon and at night & it will frequently cure a Jaundice in a few days taking it constantly.

Hr

Note the use of yellow potions—saffron or egg—in the treatment of jaundice. This may be an application of the Doctrine of Signature. Culpeper proclaimed saffron "a notable Remedy for the Yellow-Jaundice." However, by 1791 "the esti-

mation in which it was held as a medicine has been rather on the decline." Reuter's 1764 botanical inventory of the North Carolina Wachovia settlements listed "Wild Saffron" in the medical garden, perhaps in anticipation of its usefulness for liver complaints. [29] A receipt adopted from Wesley omitted the yellow of the egg: "Cure for jaundice—Beat the white of an egg thin, take it morning and evening in a glass of warter" (Tm).

The liver was thought responsible when a child did not thrive. The sickly child might have been diagnosed as "liver grown," a condition characterized by an enlarged liver. A test for the defect was noted in the Thompson manuscript: "it may be known in a young Child by laying the Child on its belley & one foot and the oppesitt hand togather & then the other in the same way. & if the Don't both meet it has this Disease or by feeling on the right side of the Brest a long the Short Ribbs you may feel the place where the liver grow."

> Cure for the Liver grown—
>
> take hog's lard & a red onnion & Stew the onnion in the grease & take the ointment on your fingars of both han & rub it round the child from the Back to the Brest then from the Brest to the Back three times then take the Child by the legs and turn it up & Shake it—this operation is to be done three times having intervilles of twelve hours each time—
>
> Tm

> To cure a Child—when the scirts is growd to the side—
>
> take the oldest hogs fat, and mix Red peper with it, not so much as to blister—and anoint the part three days, if it makes the skin look red make the ointment weaker—it may be done by putting less peper in, after three days anoint with the fat with little or no peper in it for a week.
>
> Tm

Scirts (skirt) referred to the diaphragm. Thompson advised, "All childring that does not thrive well ought to be examined for this diseas."

The chronic constitutional complaints grouped in this chapter were generally identified by combinations of pain and swelling. Diuretics and various warming treatments characterized remedies for these disorders. Depletion therapies were aimed at the clear fluids—urine, perspiration, and excess fluid retained in tissues.

Diagnosis of chronic internal disorders was often quite vague. As the next chapter illustrates, skin diseases were also difficult to distinguish from one another.

Chapter 8—
Common External Complaints

Itch, Sores, Tetter, Cancers

Skin diseases were often difficult to distinguish from each other, then as now. Popular remedies were employed across the spectrum of itches, rashes, sores, bruises, wounds, burns, and even cancers. The receipts in this section therefore are more logically grouped by ingredients and type rather than by usage.

A traveler near the Toe River in western North Carolina in 1795 noted in his journal, "the People lives uncomen poor & mostly have the Each [itch] & as durty as dirt will make them." The itch, a recurring complaint, "was commonly cured by an ointment made of brimstone [sulfur] and hog's lard." Buchan's medical guide was emphatic on this point: "As sulfur is both the most safe and efficacious medicine for the itch, we shall not recommend any other. Other medicines may be used by persons of skill, but are not to be ventured upon by the ignorant." [1]

Some domestic practitioners favored adding herbs to the basic sulfur and lard ointment as in the following formulas:

> For the Itch
>
> Mix one tea spoon full of Helleibore and 1 do. Brimstone with hogs lard rub one or two nights before the fire, then take a dose of Physick.
>
> Hr

> for the Itch approved
>
> Boil Dock root soft enough to go thro a seive (the kind of seive used for winnowing Corn) then take equal weight of flower of Brimstone mix both up in as much unsalted Butter as will make it a Salve the patient must be anointed every Night for a Week.
>
> PD

Purely botanical remedies were much in vogue. Dock and elm had long been considered herbs of special benefit for skin eruptions, along with wormwood, chamomile, and elder. John Thompson's manuscript suggested poultices of elder (inner bark or flowers), chamomile, and/or wormwood for white swellings. El-

"To Make Green Salve" and "To Make Seerecloth." Rachel Stout Allen Medical Memorandum, n.d. (probably late 1700s). Note an old penmanship lesson used for the cover of this homemade book. Courtesy North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

der bark was "accounted a good Antiscorbutic" (used against scurvy), while "an excellent Ointment" was to be made of the flowers. The elder flowers also were reputed useful in "Arthritic Swellings." [2] Although white swelling, or swelling without redness, often referred to arthritic swelling in the joints, several remedies from these sources suggest that certain sores might have been considered white swellings as well.

A cure for a white swelling of any discription—Take Elderflowers one handfull or more and Boyl them in new milk; and make a poltice with the crums of light wheet bread put into the milk and elder flowers and bind it to the sore as warm as it can be born by the patiant—at the same time keep the body open with purgitives, apply the poultice once a day.

Tm

Mrs. Eversole's Cure for a white Sweeling—

Take a handful of Peach-tree leaves if in the summer or a handful of Peachtree bark if in the winter and as much Cat-nip & boil it in newmilk & thicken it with wheat bran, and apply it as a poltice—

NB she says she has Cured some when they had been rising 3 weeks.

Ln

More drastic cures for cutaneous diseases were attempted through addition of salts of mercury, lead, copper, or other metals. The dangers accompanying use of such chemicals were debated by various authors. The October 29, 1799, *Raleigh Register and North Carolina Weekly Advertiser* contained an ad for "Soverign Ointment for the Itch," which was claimed to be safer than other commercial preparations. The advertisement declared that the ointment contained "no Mercury the Basis of most Remedies for this distemper, and whose pernicious Effects have been severely felt by Thousands."

William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* warned that much mischief was "done by the use of mercury in this disease [the itch]." However, Buchan advised repeated doses of "the common purging mercurial pill" along with application of mercurial ointment to cancers. [3] Mercury preparations were known and used by a wide range of health-care providers, domestic and professional. The Thompson manuscript suggested a solution of corrosive sublimate of mercury in whiskey as a frequent wash to parts affected by tetter (ringworm, impetigo, herpes). Harriott Pinckney Horry's manuscript includes the following receipt without specifying whether this ointment was meant for such complaints as itch and tetter, for cancer, or for venereal diseases, all of which were commonly treated with mercury.

> Best Mercurial Ointment
>
> Take 1/2 oz calomel & 1 oz. Spirit hartshorn or Sal. Vol. mix it well together then add hogslard or Tallow sufficient to make it into an ointment.
>
> Hr

Lead was employed in cerecloths (dressings for wounds) and also in salves for corn removal. A cerecloth was prepared by applying medical ingredients to a cloth, as in this receipt from Rachel Stout Allen's manuscript:

> To make Seerecloth
>
> take one quart of Olive oyl one pound of White led one pound of Red led ten ounces of Casteel Sope pound the led and Sift it then put it all together and hang it over the fire and boil it gently often Stiring it till it turns of a grayish colour then take a Smooth Board and greese it with oyl drop Some thereon and if it will peel of Clean it is done Make it into Convenient Lumps for use while warm NB Boil it in the Brass is the best.
>
> Al

Eliza Smith suggested another technique for preparing a cerecloth: dip pieces of cloth in a hot mixture similar to Allen's "and when you take them out, throw them into a pail of water; and as they cool, take them out, and lay them on a table, and clap [pat vigorously] them; and when you have done, roll them up with

papers between, and keep them for use; they must be kept pretty cool." Smith recommended this lead-impregnated cerecloth "for any pain, swelling, or bruise." [4]

Copper preparations were more common than those using mercury or lead for external applications. Zinc and arsenic were also mentioned in these personal medical notes. A traditional preparation, "The green Oil or Balsam," was detailed in the John Quincy's 1736 *Pharmacopoeia*. One pound of linseed oil and four drams of verdigris boiled together yielded a cleansing oil for "foul Ulcers" and "contused and lacerated Wounds."[5] Several manuscript sources contained directions for similar medicines. The first entry in the Allen medicine book, a receipt for green salve, noted its usefulness "to take out proud flesh [excessive granulation on surface of a wound] and dead flesh from old Soars & Clense them":

> To make Green Salve
>
> take one pound of bores Greese one pound of turpentine and melt it together then take it of the fire take one ounce of Vardigreese and pound it and Sift it then put it in and Simmer it over the fire but not to boil to be Sure put Something over thy face while pounding Sifting and Stiring and Stiring in the Vardigreese.
>
> Al

Verdigris (copper acetate) was the active ingredient in green salve, while the base ingredients varied. Yellow rosin, beeswax, and hog's grease were combined with verdigris in an undated Cameron family method with instructions to stir until "well melted then pour it in a pail of cold water and work it up like shoe makers wax." A copper acetate salve was also employed to combat the spread of fungus infections related to ringworm, known alternately as *tetter* or *scald head:*

> Dr. ORiley's Cure for a Tetter worm in the head, or Scald-head
>
> Mix a Tea-spoon full of Verdigreese, a teaspoonfull of hogs fat & a teaspoonfull of Mutton Seuit and noint the place
>
> he says a scald head cannot be cured without a Course of Physic—
>
> Ln

Another copper salt, cupric sulfate, was similarly employed in healing sores and/or tetter. Cupric sulfate was known by a variety of common names—blue vitriol, bluestone, and roman vitriol. The first two receipts that follow reflect Thompson's and Allen's backcountry methods, while the third receipt, from Archibald Maclaine's commonplace book, comes from the more sophisticated eastern North Carolina region:

> To make a plaister for any rising [tumor or abscess] & particular for a womans Brest it will Brake it quick—take a lump of BlueStone the Size of a grain of corn, pound it fine and mix it with a little honey.
>
> Tm

To make Red ointment

to take out did or proud flesh from a Sore take about the Bigness of a bean or grean of Corn of Blue Vittoral 2 or 3 Spoonfulls of Honey poudder the blow Stone & mix them Stew them moderately til it turns of a red colour then mix a Spoonfull of Vinegar With it and Stew it in.

Al

An infallible Cure for any Ulcer or old Sore

Take 1 oz. Rom. vitroil, 2 oz Rock Allum, 1 oz Copperas [a sulfate of either copper or iron], & 1 pint White Wine Vinegar; boil them all together, & put them into Bottle, which shake before you wash the sore. This is also good against Navel Galls &c in Horses.

Mc

From a Dorothea Christina Schmidt's lowcountry receipt book came the following method for combating infection in a puncture wound:

A cure for running a nail or Fishboon in the Foot or any other part in the body

Take a cooper [copper] dip it in Campher and put it to the wound.

Sm

Herbs were often joined with chemical ingredients, as in the following cures for external cancers and old sores. Philip Miller's popular *Gardener's Dictionary* of 1759 warned, "Of late there have been some Quacks, who pretend to cure Cancers with this Herb [Phytolacca, pokeweed], but I have not met with one Instance of its having been serviceable in that Disorder." [6] This use persisted, however. Two piedmont Carolinian commonplace books show that pokeweed was considered a cancer remedy in the backcountry. Anne Cameron's 1816 household notebook contains the popular Dr. Starbuck's receipt "for the purpose of drawing out the cancer," involving poke root, jimson weed, and boar tusk root, as well as a "Receipt for the Cure of Cancer" of roasted onion and puccoon root. A loose sheet among the Cameron family papers contains "Hezekiah Starebuck's receipt for cure of Cancer November 1809." William Lenoir acquired the same cure from an Orange County, North Carolina, doctor in 1811:

To Cure a Cancer

Burn Blue-stone till it is white & burn Copperas till it is red and Pulverize them, take an equal quantity of each, and twice as much Puckoon Root (dried and Pulverized) as of both the others together mix them together and Sprinkle said Powder over a plaister of Roasted Onions, big enough to Cover the Cancer; put a fresh plaister every day

> until the Cancer is killed, except the margin appears to inflame too much or blisters arise in the margin & if it does, omit the aforesaid plaister and apply a plaister of young Poke-root (not over one year old) roasted, and hogs tusk, NB. to make said Plaister take 3/4 of Roasted poke-root & 1/4 of hogs-tusk taken out of the Tussick, and the outside pealed off till it looks like a hogs-tusk & mash it raw; mix them together & apply that to the place, till the blisters subside or the inflamation ceases, and then if the Cancer is not killed, in 12 or 14 days apply the first plaister again—when the Cancer is killed it must not be pulled out for fear of leaving some of the roots behind, then heal up the place with the second plaister above mentioned—when this plaister gets too dry and hard have some of the hog-tusk Steeped in water till it becomes very Slimey & moison the plaister with it—NB. to fix the first plaister sprinkle as much of the powder (over so much of the roasted Onions as will cover the Cancer) as will turn it to a redish Colour—I understand the above is the great (Cancer Docter) Starrbuck's method of Curing cancer—and Dr. Umstead says it is the best cure that he ever tried.
>
> Ln

Another of Lenoir's cures similarly demonstrated the shotgun approach of combining several popular remedies, in this case sulfur, alum, and a copper salt with herbs.

> To Cure an Old sore
>
> Take Red-Oak bark, Dogwood bark, Posemon bark, Red-Shoemake roots, high-land, blackberry brier roots, Brimstone, Allum, Blue Stone, Yolks of 2 eggs—2 spoon fulls of rum—2 spoonfulls of honey, 2 spoon fulls of apple-vinagar Salt petre,—put into a black bottle & shake it for one or two hours.
>
> Ln

Lenoir further noted, "old Mr. Reggins says Bluestone, burt Copperas, Tobacco ashes and Vinegar will Cure a Tetter."

In addition to his rather complicated cures for sores and cancers, Lenoir recorded several simple remedies for skin problems. From an 1810 *Raleigh Star* Lenoir assumed "from most unquestionable authority that the Strong appleVinegar frequently applied to the part affected is a Sovereign remedy for the Cure of the most inveterate tetters." John Wesley generally favored simple kitchen cures such as vinegar for scald head, rum for the itch, and treacle (molasses) for a bruise. [7] The Horry manuscript advocated simple applications of tallow on a rag for tetter worm.

Tallow or other fat was used alone or in combination with tar to combat skin

disorders. Three South Carolina lowcountry receipts presented curious variations on this theme:

For a Scald Head

Take the fat end of a Neck of Mutton, lay it to ye fire to roast and baist it with a pound of Tar till it drops to pieces and is quite like salve, every morning and evening the head must be wash'd with All Flower Water and then anointed with this Salve. A Better Way is to take 6 oz Tar, 6 Oz Mutton suet and a hand full the inside bark of Elder, boil it till the bark is crisp then strain it, spread thick over the inside of a cap made of thick linen and put on the head it will stick close and let it remain till it loosens round the edges then cut it off by degrees when quite dry.

Hr

for an Herpes or scald Head

Hang a bit of Bacon on a string upon the fire while it is wasting baste it with Tar as it drop catch it in a Bason it will make an excellent ointment.

PD

Another for the Herpes

Take a piece of rusty Bacon melt it in a Iron frying pan Take out what remains of the Bacon & put the Yolk of an egg well beaten to it when it has done boiling mix them well together into an ointment.

PD

Sores were of many different types, from old wounds to boils, wens, imposthumes (swellings, cysts, abscesses), and cancers. Recommended remedies ran the gamut as well, from kitchen physic and predictable ingredients to the bizarre.

One of Thompson's cures for boils was simply "Take Cornmeal dough and lay it on the Boyle." From Wesley's *Primitive Physick,* Thompson borrowed the following simple cure:

An Imposthume—put the white of two leeks in a wet cloth, and so roast them in ashes, but not too much. Stamp them in a morter with a little hogs-grease. Spread it thick like a plaster and apply it. Changing it every hour, till all the matter comes out. (Said to be infallible.)

Tm

Three curious treatments for sores and injuries appear in manuscripts. Lenoir related the following case: "Joshua Norman's leg was kicked by a horse and

remained Sore a long time altho many things applied to it, and Mr. Boring from Surry Cy. cured him by the Smoak of Corn Cobs, he fixed the fire several yards off and let the Smoak come underground, like deer skins are Commonly Smoaked." However odd it may seem today, using wood lice, snails, and dung formed part of the traditional materia medica of the time.

For an Old Sore

Boil an Egg hard, cut it across through Shell and all as hot as Possible: take out the Yolk and throw away, and fill one half of the White with burn'd allum finely powder'd, and the other half with Wood Lice; close ye Egg together and put it into a coarse thin Cloth and Squeeze and press it very hard till you get out all the liquor, dip a feather in this liquor and wash the sore with it, and lay a bit of dry lint over it. NB this is particularly for drying up a sore when it is difficult to heal.

Pk, Hr

Green Ointment

Take Rosemary Lavender Wormwood Wild Sage Lavender Cotton Agrimony Bay leaves Rue Brooklime Camomile Leaves dwarf elder leaves Southern wood and Featherfew of each a handfull shred very small:—also half the quantity of Thyme & Marygold Leaves Then take five pound of new Butter unsalted—boil the butter & herbs together—till the herbs are crisp—about an hour & half—then strain the oil from the herbs—& put to the oil a pint of Cow-Dung new made—& of hens-dung half an ounce. Cloves mace & cinnamon of each half an ounce, with two large nutmegs well beaten & one pint of black dew Snails. When these are well boiled together near four hours is the whole of boiling it strain the oil for use—it is good for a dry Cough—Rickets in Children by anointing their joints—likewise all swellings—nobs or wounds in the breast—and for all bruises outward—or inward the bigness of a walnut may be taken at a time.—

PD

It is noteworthy that this ointment was recommended for use both internally and externally on swellings, wounds, and bruises as well as for rickets and chest complaints. Perhaps the generous amounts of cloves, cinnamon, mace, and nutmeg rendered the dung and snails more palatable. This green ointment bears little resemblance to other "green" preparations, their names and color being usually derived from mineral ingredients rather than herbs.

A variety of swellings, tumors, abscesses, and ulcers might have been judged cancers. Since not all of these so-called cancers were indeed malignant, seemingly miraculous cures were accomplished.

Gerard's herbal declared that figs in combination with other herbs served to "soften and ripen . . . all hot and angry swellings." Figs showed up in several southern sources as treatment for cancer. A lengthy recipe involving turkey figs and milk was recorded in a mid-eighteenth-century manuscript of South Carolina lowcountry origin (PD), although this remedy was crossed out and noted, "not good."

A similar turkey fig-and-milk poultice and drink for cancers of all kinds appears in a clipping pasted into an early-nineteenth-century lowcountry commonplace book (SC). The article, reprinted from *Belfast News-Letter,* relates testimonials to amazing cures wrought by the fig-and-milk therapy. John Tobler's 1767 and 1777 almanacs include directions for applying hot figs and lard to sore breasts.

Sumac, sassafras, and oak were specifically intended for cancers, but other barks and roots were commonly employed as well. Chestnut oak bark in water boiled down to a salve for cancer was said to cure "when nothing els wood" (Tm). The Allen manuscript suggests sumac root and blood wort in sour cream, along with the following:

> A Receit for a Cancer
>
> take the bark of the root of Spanish oak dogwood sassafras persimon and the shoemake that bares the berrys take of thes one pound each off the north side wash them scrape of the outside bark put them in a pot cover it close boile it fr half a day then strain the liquer then put it in a small pot and bile it to it becomes a save then put it away for use this is to be put on the sore ones in 24 houres Cover the bark with water boil tow to Spread the save on.
>
> Al
>
> To cure Cancers, ulcers—In the month of July or August take the sprouts that comes up from the beech mast roots and tops and boile them in a suficient quantity of warter until the strength is extracted. then strain the Decoction and boil it again to a pillulae consistance, of this mass form pills of an ordinary size. The dose is two every night and morning for an external application take of male sumake root an equal quantity boil them in a sufficient quantity of warter to a strong decoction; then strain & boil to the consistence of thick honey this is to be applied in the form of plaisters once or twice a Day.
>
> —The noted pills are formd of the extrack first mentioned with the addition of from 1/6 to 1/12 of a grain arsnick alba in each pill and about one drop of the oil of sassafrass—but I have used several—Suceed [——] without percuring any alterations in the efect. When arsnec is used it is customary to give but one pill in the 24 hours-not withstanding which I have given 3 pills in the course of a day without producing any sensible apperation.
>
> Tm

Corns and Warts

Both Eliza Pinckney and her daughter, Harriott Horry, suggested lead in treating corns. Perhaps Pinckney's note, "I found no benefit at all from this salve," led Horry to record an alternate treatment, omitting her mother's more exotic ingredients (salts of silver and gold) but retaining the olive oil and lead (diachylon). Horry's added recommendation of "a better remedy for corns" agreed with Wesley's suggested pitch plaster. [8]

> For Corns
>
> Take a bit of simple Diachylon as big as the top of your thumb and a bit of soft pinegum as large as a nutmeg, melt them together with as much old Rum as will make it soft enough to spread upon a piece of fine rag which should be applied after soaking the corns in warm water.
>
> [added] a better remedy for corns is Rosin & Beese Wax in equal quantity boil'd well together over the fire. the rosin must be first pounded very fine.
>
> Hr

Others turned to kitchen cures for corns. The following remedy may have been copied from Tobler's almanac for 1774 or another publication.

> A remedy for corns on the feet
>
> Rost a clove of garlic on a live coal or in hot ashes, apply it to the corn, and fasten it on with a piece of cloth, this must be made use of at the moment of going to bed, it softens the corn to such a degree, as to loosen, and wholly remove it, in two or three days however inveterate, afterwards wash the foot with warm water, it is right to renew this application two or three times in twenty-four hours.
>
> Sm

The manuscripts contain few treatments for warts. One turn-of-the-century published source, Alexander Thomson's *Family Physician,* suggested that since warts were not serious, no treatment was required unless they were of a troublesome size or location. He proposed, "If they be pendulous or have narrow necks, a silk thread waxed may be tied tight round them at the base, and kept in that situation until they fall off."[9] Lenoir extracted from *Hodge and Boylan's Almanack* of 1802 instructions for frequent warm application of salt water "To Cure a Wen" (a lump or protuberance on the body—a pilar cyst, knot, or wart).

For wart removal escharotic (caustic) applications were suggested—crude sal ammoniac, salt of tartar, or spirits of hartshorn. The Thompson manuscript offered one such method: "To remove warty Excresences—Take Crude Sal-amoniac

and moisten it and apply to the place affected two or three times or oftener." This wart cure reflected advice from Wesley's *Primitive Physick*. [10]

Sal ammoniac was actually Wesley's second choice for use against warts. His first suggestion was to "Rub them daily with a radish." Application of juice of marigold flowers or bruised purslane were further options. Thomson noted that "some recommend also the juice of onions."[11]

Bruises and Wounds

Nicholas Culpeper recommended parsley to "taketh away black and blue Marks coming of Bruises or Falls" and wormwood for "black and blue Spots." In 1736 Quincy reported parsley remaining in use "outwardly, by the common People, in Cataplasms," and wormwood was still used to combat "some particular Tumours." The following remedies affirmed continuation of this tradition. Straight from John Wesley's guide to domestic medicine came Thompson's cure for a bruise: "Aply a plaster of parsley, beat and mixt with butter."[12] Wounds were treated similarly:

> For all Wounds occasioned by a rusty Nail Gravel &c.
>
> One handful of parsley boiled in small Beer with a piece of Butter till the Parsley is tender then foment the place with the Liquor & make a poultice of the Parsley repeat it 2 or 3 times a Day as long as Necessary—
>
> PD

The following receipt veered from the philosophy of simple medicines, another example of the older polypharmaceutical tradition. A dozen botanical cures entered into this lard-based ointment. Most of the plants included here were also among the thirty-three herbs used to compound the green ointment from Eliza Smith's *Compleat Housewife*.[13]

> Bruise Ointment
>
> Rosemary Tops Green Sage Featherfew Lavender Tops Camomile Baum Southernwood Bittony Scarlet rose Buds take of each one large handful of Wormwood & Parsley half an handful chop all these together small put it in four pounds of Hogs Lard boil it over a gentle fire for three quarters of an hour Squeeze it throe a Cloth as hard as you can while it is hot put it into pots for use—
>
> PD

This ointment was meant for internal as well as external use: "If this is used for an outward Bruise warm it in a spoon & rub it in by the fire two or three times a day if the patient has an inward bruise it shd be taken the quantity of a small Walnut dissolved in half a pint of Ale & drink it warm at going to Bed." Hemlock was recommended as an excellent addition to the ointment although "not proper to be taken inwardly."

Domestic practitioners apparently employed Buchan's and Wesley's measures for first aid to bleeding wounds, applying ashes, lint, spores of the puffball fungus, or a more sophisticated styptic solution. A man wounded at the battle of Kings Mountain, North Carolina, in October 1780 was taken to his home on the South Fork of the Catawba River, where he experienced "the happy effects of a poultice of wet, warm ashes, applied to his wounds by his mother." [14] Lenoir declared "puff ball applied to the wound is excellent." An early nineteenth-century Tennessean took the following suggestions from Wesley's *Primitive* Physick:

> Stop bleeding at the nose or wound—Dip a lining rag in sharp vinegar and burn it and apply the ashes. or take ripe puff balls, Break them and save the Powder. Bind this on the wound. or snuff vinegar or rub it on the temples and nose.
>
> Tm

Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* advised using either blue vitriol solution or strong brandy to stop bleeding.[15] Horry's receipt combined these two ingredients:

> A Strong Styptic to stop a bleeding
>
> Take a bit of blue vitriol as big as the top of your thumb, disolve it in a teacup of water, then mix an equal quantity of Brandy with it.
>
> Hr

The styptic water of the *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* combined alum with the blue vitriol solution. Quincy's styptic water was a more complicated preparation, incorporating alum with plantain and rose water, rust, and human urine.[16]

After bleeding was subdued, concern shifted to warding off a "mortification." One method was to fill the wound with lint so that it might heal from the inside:

> To Stop Blood Scrape the inside bark of white Hickory to a lint and apply it to the wound; the bark of a Hickory—grub Just below the surface of the Earth is said to be the best.
>
> Ln

Horry suggested a healing salve to aid the effort:

> A Healing Salve
>
> Take of Feverfew, Mullin, Elder, St. Johns Wort, Pennyworth, and Hart Snakeroot of each a double handfull, a piece of Tallow, Fresh Butter, Bees Wax and soft yellow pine Gum; put all these ingredients into a pot with a little Water and good deal of hogs Laird, and let them stew till all the strength is drawn out of the Herbs: then strain it. NB. it will take several hours Stewing.
>
> For a New sore or fresh wound take the Yolk of an Egg and a little soft white pine Gum, mix them together and put with a piece of lint

upon the sore and put this salve over it.—If you have Mutton Tallow, tis preferable to Beef Tallow. The butter should be fresh from the Churn without any Salt.

Hr

Fresh wounds were treated with assorted ointments or alternately with poultices. According to Doddridge, "Gun shot, and other wounds, were treated with slippery elm bark, flax seed and other such like poultices"; however, he reported that a wound poulticed with spikenard roots "soon terminated in an extensive mortification." Wild indigo was used similarly and by the end of the eighteenth century apparently enjoyed good repute in treatment of wounds, although its use was unknown to the Moravian surveyor, Christian Gottlieb Reuter, in 1764: "I have not heard that any use is made of it, but it is good to keep away flies when stuck around horses." Wild indigo as an antiseptic was listed in James Thacher's dispensatory as quoted in Buchan's 1816 edition. [17]

For a Fresh Cut—

Robt. Epperson Senr. says he cut his foot very bad with an ax and a man that was with him dug up some wild Indigo Root & pounded it fine with his ax, in the mean time sd. Epperson kept spiting on it & it Remained too dry & he pised on it & applyed it to the Cut & soon Cured it—

Ln

To Stop a Mortification . . .

he says that a young man hurt his leg and a spot turn'd black & 3 Docters was of opinion it was most advisible to cut it off an old Dutch man desired to try to Cure it—and he filled a 5 Gallon Port with the Roots of wild Indigo & water & boiled it away to half a pint then put in a Quart of old whiskey & a quantity of Butter-milk which turned to Curd, & applyed that to the place, & it soon took the black colour out of it & it soon got well by the help of salve &c.

Ln

This receipt and the simple honey and rum remedy that follows reflect the prevailing fear of infection in a wound. In cases of mortified wounds, amputation generally offered the desperate patient's only hope. On June 6, 1778, the *General Evening Post* reported

a Correspondent who has in various instances experienced the wonderful effects of a Mixture of Honey & rum in cases of bruises cuts & inveterate Sores when all other Medicines have failed as a friend to Mankind communicates it to the publick. The Correspondent gives his honour that he knows two Instances wherein amputations were

avoided by it & cures in milder cases innumerable The part should be kept continually wet with the application untill it is well—an equal quantity of each are to be mixed & well shaken together [or] Rum & vinegar mixd equal quantity excellent for any fresh Bruise or wound.

SC

Burns and Frostbite

"For burns a poultice of Indian meal was a common remedy," according to Doddridge, who also reported use of poultices of scraped potatoes, roasted turnips, or slippery elm bark in Pennsylvania and Virginia settlements. "I do not recollect that any internal remedy or bleeding was ever used for burns." In *Domestic Medicine,* however, Buchan advised home practitioners to let blood and administer oral doses of the bark in cases of severe or inflamed burns. [18]

Oil, butter, or other fat formed the base of most remedies for burn and chilblain (frostbite). Olive oil and apple formed a simple poultice:

For a Burn

Take off all the Skin core & stalk of an Apple then pound it in a marble Mortar with olive oil to a poultice & apply it changing as it drys it will take the fire out very soon if any sore remains apply the chilblain plaister.

SC

A cream made of lime (calcium oxide) and oil also was widely recommended for burns. Eliza Smith's popular *Compleat Housewife* included directions for preparing this cream using linseed oil. Thompson copied his version from Wesley's *Primitive Physick.*[19]

Deep Burns or Scaulds—Mix lime water and sweet oil to the thickness of Cream apply it with a feather several times a Day—this is the most effectual application I ever met with. (or put it in cold water.)

Tm

The *Compleat Housewife* offered, "A Salve for a Blast, Burn, or Scald," made of May butter and the inner bark of the elder.[20] The two receipts below reflect a similar heritage.

To make ointment to Cure a burn or Scald

take the tender tops of high RattleSnake in the Spring of the year & fresh may Butter & pound them well together then make it up in Balls let it lie about SIX weeks then put it in a Kettle over the fire let them Simmer Well then Stain them out keep it for use.

Al

A Receipt for An Ointment for A Burn or Scald

Take heartleaves, the innermost bark of Elder & the bark of Shewmake roots stew them well together In hogs fat, or fresh butter, & then Take out the Leave & Cetera, & the ointment is fit for use. [21]

Frostbite was treated similarly to burns, with salves and chicken fat, as in these two receipts:

A Salve for Chilblains & burns Dr. Glass

Take four ounces of Beef Marrow four ounces of Venice Turpentine four ounces of Bees wax put them in a new pipkin & simmer them over a slow fire when tis all melted take it off & add four ounces of olive oil & stir it Carefully till cold if the chilblains are broken spread the Salve on a very fine rag & apply it—change the plaister once a Day If the Skin is not broke tis only to be rub'd in well Night & Morning & thread Stockings or rag worn over it—to be used in the same Manner for Burns or any sore where a plaister is Necessary To cure a Scald where the Skin is not broken dip a rag in spirits of Wine & wrap it up frequently wetting the rag.

SC

Cure for frost bites

Rub the part affected three or four times before the fire with the fat of dung-hill fowls—then rub it with flannel, and wrap it up, in two or three days the cure will be effected.

Sm

This treatment accomplished warming through rubbing. Frederic William Marshall provides an alternate method for returning warmth to the frostbitten part. Although excrement from birds was esteemed as hot and penetrating, in Quincy's opinion, fowl dung was introduced into medicine "more from Fancy than good Reason."[22]

A Reccit against sore Legs breaking by Cold & Chillblanes

Take the Dung of Fowls, mix it with Water & boil it well, then cover the Vessell into which your pour it with a Cloth, & let the hot Steam rise to your Leg, untill you can bear to put the Sore Leg into the Thing itself, & keep it therein, till it groweth cold. Repeat it once or twice, & it will affect a thoro cure for ever.

Ml

Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids (piles) were considered an affliction of persons "of a loose spungy fibre, of a bulky size, who live high, and lead a sedentary inactive life."

Buchan remarked, "A flux of blood from the anus is not always to be treated as a disease. It is even more salutary than bleeding at the nose, and often prevents or carries off diseases." [23] Although bleeding was considered therapeutic, excessive bleeding was recognized as dangerous, and the discomfort of piles demanded treatment.

Healing preparations were to be applied "tenderly." *The Compleat Housewife* proposed a simple remedy: "Take calcin'd oyster-shells, mix it with honey, and anoint the part tenderly night and morning."[24] Horry recommended an internal dose of calcined shells:

> For the Piles
>
> Take Muscles [mussels] and wash the shells well with a brush both inside and out after having scraped out the Muscles clean, put them into the fire and burn them, then powder them fine and sift them and take as much as will lie on a shilling twice a day. For an outward application, make rum quite hot dip a cloth in it and apply hot to the part.
>
> Hr

In cases of piles, a prescribed medicine was commonly taken internally as well as externally. Lenoir reported that the following treatment cured a man in 1820 "when he had got appearantly past all hopes, he had lost an emence quantity of Blood, & was too weak to walk":

> Cure for the Piles
>
> Take of what is called the Balsum of Fir half a Teaspoonfull twice a day & may increas the quantity or take it oftener, and apply a little of the Balsum externally also.
>
> Ln

Wesley's preferred cure for piles was to "Apply warm treacle, or a tobacco leaf steeped in water twenty four hours."[25] In addition to using soothing applications, sufferers from hemorrhoids were cautioned to avoid constipation:

> In all cases of the piles Keep the bowels open with Sulphur—or sulphur and Cream of Tartar mixed in Equal quantities with honey. two teaspoonfulls may be taken every two hours. in Slight cases this is frequently sufficient to cure the Disease alone.
>
> Tm

> For the Piles
>
> one oz of Senna powdered and sifted, one oz of flower of Brimstone, one oz of Magnesia, one oz of Honey one Nutmeg grated fine half a tablespoon of sweet oil mix them well together. At going to Bed take the quantity of a Walnut repeat it when [——].
>
> SC

Another, almost identical, receipt in the SC commonplace book substituted crabs' eyes for magnesia.

Healing preparations for external afflictions generally relied on sulfur, a metallic compound, or a product of the pine tree in an oily base. An eclectic assortment of herbs, kitchen cures, and animal simples were also employed. Each personal collection of cures included at least one remedy for cutaneous erruptions and injuries. The next chapter illustrates that the use of metallic salts in eye waters paralleled their use in skin preparations.

Chapter 9—
Disorders of the Senses

Eye, ear, nose, and mouth treatments bear similarities to the remedies for other external disorders collected in the preceding chapter. Domestic practitioners undoubtedly felt more confident in treating disorders of the skin and of the senses than when faced with life-threatening internal diseases.

Eyes

Dr. William Buchan observed "almost every person pretending to be possessed of some secret preparation for the cure of sore eyes." A typical approach to eye disorders was related in a 1798 letter: "little Harriots eye continues weak, they tried [tutty, zinc] ointment but found it too severe, nor can they be persuaded to put her to the pain of a seton." This treatment fit Buchan's advice perfectly. In addition to medications applied to the eyes, he considered setons (issues or openings for the discharge of fluids) "of prime use." Such a discharging wound might have been produced by drawing a thread or horsehair through a fold of skin or by inserting a pea under the skin. Blisters and setons on the neck, back of the head, or behind the ears were kept open and draining as counterirritants. [1]

For preventing disorders of the eyes, Buchan also advised, "It will likewise be of use to . . . bleed or purge every spring and fall." Bloodletting was practiced for eye problems in piedmont North Carolina. In one case of a weeping and light-sensitive eye, the Moravian journals reported that the trouble disappeared after the patient was bled.[2]

On examining commonplace cures, Buchan declared the basis of most eye waters to be alum, vitriol, or lead.[3] Many southern medical manuscripts followed that norm.

> Eye water—take 2 1/2 grains of sugar of lead as much white vetriol put them into one pint of spring water let it stand 12 hours then decant it off for use and throw away the settlings.
>
> Tm
>
> White vitreal is also good to mix it with water & wash the Eyes immediately before it becomes Curdy & ly on you back & have it drop'd in

the Eyes & avoid Rubing or Scratching—

NB to mix it take of the white Vitreal about the Contents of a small grain of wheat, & desolve it in a Teaspoonfull of water—&c.

Ln

White vitriol was not the only zinc preparation employed in eye waters. Calamine stone and tutty were also used:

For a Wattrey Eye or Inflamation

Half an ounce of Lapis Calaminaris finely beaten, 2 ounces of Oyl of Walnuts mixed well together and shook, when you use it which must be when you goe to bed dip a painters pencil into it and draw it over the Eye Lashes from the Temple to the Nose.

Pk

"Denotes the Part of the Neck for the Transverse Seton." "A Seton is a few Horse-hairs, small Threads, or a larger Packthread, drawn through the Skin, chiefly of the Neck, by Means of a large Needle or Probe, with a View to restore or preserve Health. . . . The Ligature is to be shifted or drawn through the Wound a little every Day."
From Laurence Heister, *A General System of Surgery in Three Parts* (London, 1757). Courtesy Health Sciences Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

In addition to zinc and lead, another heavy metal, copper, entered into eye remedies:

> Eye Water call'd the Tincture of Emerald
>
> Take 1/4# of the cutings of Copper and put it into a quart of Madiera Wine and let it improve till it becomes of a fine emerald green, when it will be fit for use.
>
> NB. it will require standing upon the Copper six months to make it of a proper strength and colour.
>
> Hr

Aluminum (alum) and copper (verdigris) were combined in the following piedmont North Carolina source:

> To Make Eye Water
>
> Take half a point of Spring water the bigness of two hazelnuts of allom one Spoonfull of hunney the bigness of a large heazelnut of verdigreese boile all together and Scum it well Let it Settle and bottle it for use.
>
> Al

Dr. William Smellie's eye ointment combined camphor, calamine stone, and verdigris in a base of lard and mutton suet. This receipt, "long in esteem for diseases of the eyes," was appended to Buchan's book for domestic use. [4]

Indeed, camphor was a common addition to eye waters. Although Buchan thought it "of little use" in waters, he considered ointments made more efficacious by the addition of camphor. John Wesley's advice for weak eyes, "The temples and round the eye may be touched with camphorated spirits," was echoed in the Rachel Stout Allen manuscript: "Wet the Eye Lids Morning & Evening with Camphire."[5]

The absence of rose water from southern manuscript receipts for collyria (eyewashes) is curious. Rose water was included in many eye preparations in such popular publications as Buchan's *Domestic Medicine,* Wesley's *Primitive Physick,* and John Quincy's *Pharmacopoeia Officinalis*. Wesley listed as "tried" a simple froth of egg white with rose water applied to the eyelids to allay inflammation.[6] The Doctrine of Signatures may have suggested the use of egg for eye complaints, the eye and the egg having similar form.

The *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* offered a receipt for alum curd, prepared by shaking raw egg white and alum together, for use against severe optical inflammation. James Thacher outlined an alternate method for preparing eye water from boiled egg whites and alum that resembled the following frontier cure:[7]

> A Phellum on the eye—Roast an egg. Take out the yoke then take out allum the size of a large grain of corn or a small teaspoon full when reduced to powder. Mix it with the white of the egg well, then put

them into a clean linning rag and squese out the juice. put it into a phial then use it as other eye water till well; if it returns use it again and again.

Tm

Another group of eye waters resulted from placing white vitriol in the hollow where the yellow was removed from a boiled egg. The warmth of the egg dissolved the vitriol, thus forming the eye water. [8] It is interesting to note the similarity of the above receipt to Harriott Horry's remedy "For an Old Sore" (see chapter 8), which employed the liquid squeezed from an egg white filled with alum and wood lice.

Kitchen remedies for the eyes involved not only eggs but also milk, flour, vinegar, lemon, and honey. Wesley's recommended use of juice from rotten apples was essentially identical to this vinegar cure from William Lenoir's manuscript:

Apple Vinegar weakened with water is good for sore Eyes. Abram Sudduth says, & WL [William Lenoir] believes it.

Ln

For a Bruise upon the eye or any other part even if the skin is broke. . . . It will take out the blackness & ease the pain speedily a slice of Lemon applied to the Part.

PD

Milk & water as warm a you can bear to wash your Eyes with it is good also—

Ln

Cure inflamed Eyes which is sometimes occationed by a bug flying in them

Take new milk & thicken it with flower, (cold) & spread it on a Cloth & apply it to the Eye or Eyes effected like a poltice.

Ln

old Sally Cole says Honey is good also—

Ln

The southern sources seem to have preferred chemical and kitchen treatments but do contain two herbal optical preparations—Lenoir's "puckoon root" steeped in water and Christian Gottlieb Reuter's maidenhair root "fastened in a cloth."[9] Most of these treatments for disordered eyes seem to have ignored Buchan's warning that "neither eyes nor ears ought to be tampered with; they are tender organs, and require a very delicate touch."[10]

Ears

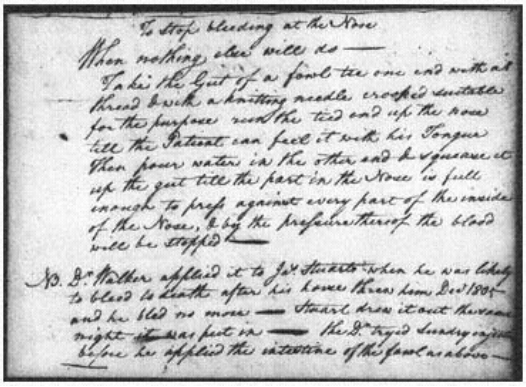
While optical medicines were often harsh, domestic remedies for the ears were generally mild, derived from kitchen and garden ingredients, including onions, garlic, figs, apples and crab apples, fat bacon, and salt. Herbs were also employed for the ears—wormwood, rosemary, rue, hemp seed, and tobacco. Brandy, honey, sweet oil, and almond oil complete the list of common ingredients. Certain exotic medicines were suggested, although in Buchan's opinion "frequently they do hurt." [11] Saltwater ear drops were one of the simplest treatments for deafness:

> Against Deafness
>
> Put a Tablespoon of Bay Salt into near half a pint of cold Water, & after it hath steeped therein for 24 Hours, now & then shaking the phial, cause a small TeaSpoon full to be poured into the Ear affected, every Night when in Bed, for 7 or 8 Nights successively, observing to lay your Head on the opposite Side, by which the Cure is generally compleated.
>
> Ml

While Wesley also promoted salt water to remedy deafness, for earache he recommended blowing tobacco smoke into the ear.[12] There appears to have been an ongoing tradition of tobacco smoke used against ear problems, judging by the following therapy, which Lenoir copied into his personal book of cures. By this method he noted "a Gentleman being Cured that had been Deaf for 20 years."

> Cure for Deafness, from the Starr or NC. State Gazette Jany 26th-1816—By Tobacco Smoke—
>
> Fill the mouth full of the smoke of strong Tobacco, and Instantly to Cose [close] the mouth and nose and make all the effort possible as if you meant to force the smoke throe the nose, which must be prevented by holding the nostrils very tight this forces the back passage the Eustachian tube into the ear the efforts must be repeated untill one or both Ears give a crack when the hearing Returns. If necessary the Efforts ought to be continued every night for several weeks.
>
> Ln

Many popular authors concurred on the use of onions and garlic for deafness and earache. According to Nicholas Culpeper, garlic "easeth Pains in the Ears," although onions were said to be as effectual. "Juice of Onions . . . dropped in the Ears easeth the Pains and Noises thereof." Wesley recommended a red onion, minus its core, filled with almond oil and allowed to stand so that the oil and onion mixed. The resulting liquid was dropped into the ear, which was then stopped with black wool. John Tennent published a similar receipt prepared from rattlesnake oil in a hollowed onion and the ear stopped with cotton. Thomas



"To Stop Bleeding at the Nose."
William Lenoir Medical Memorandum, 1805–39. Courtesy Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Johnson's *Every Man His Own Doctor,* published in Salisbury, North Carolina, in 1798, directed roasting an onion filled with rattlesnake oil but specified a black-wool plug for the ear. [13]

The Allen manuscript author adopted several characteristic ear treatments from Wesley's book. Two of these receipts employed traditional garlic or onions:

> for deafness & busing in ye head
>
> peel a Clove of garlic dip it in honey & put it in ye Eare at Lying down.
>
> Al
>
> Nurse [Noise] in the Eare
>
> Drop in Juse of onions.
>
> Al
>
> ye Eare Ach from worms
>
> drop in warm Milk Brings them out or Juse of Wormwood Which kills them.
>
> Al

Syringing the ears with warm milk and water or water alone was recommended for loosening hardened ear wax as well as for earache. The warm appli-

cation of a bladder filled with warm milk and water or a flannel bag filled with boiled mallows and chamomile flowers undoubtedly soothed painful ears. [14]

Nose

Nosebleed was at times considered helpful rather than harmful. Buchan stated, "In all diseases where bleeding is necessary, a spontaneous discharge of blood from the nose is of much more service than the same quantity let with a lancet." He wrote further, "the great point is to determine whether it ought to be stopped or not."[15]

Nosebleeds were occasionally augmented by letting additional blood. One member of the North Carolina Moravian community in 1775 "had such a hemmorhage from the nose that it was necessary to bleed her. The flow was checked for several hours, then began again, and worse than before." At this point it was decided that the nosebleed should be stopped, and the caregivers sent for a special stone thought useful for this purpose.[16]

Lenoir set down another curious method for accomplishing this task using a bird's intestine to apply pressure inside the bleeding nostril:

> To Stop bleeding at the Nose
>
> When nothing else will do—Take the Gut of a fowl tie one end with a thread & with a knitting needle crooked suitable for the purpose run the tied end up the nose till th Patient can feel it with his Tongue Then pour water in the other end & squease it up th gut till the part in the Nose is full enough to press against every part of the inside of the Nose, & by the pressure thereof the blood will be stopped.
>
> Ln

Lenoir further noted, "Dr. Walker applied it to Jas. Stuart when he was likely to bleed to death after his horse threw him Decr 1805 and he bled no more—Stuart drew it out the same night it was put in—the Dr. tryed Sundry injections before he applied the intestine of the fowl as above."

A more common method of applying pressure inside a bleeding nose entailed rolls of linen cloth stuffed into the nostrils "quite through to their posterior aperatures." Buchan described a process by which threads, drawn through the nostrils and out the mouth, were used to guide the wetted cloth or lint into place. This technique worked in much the same manner as Lenoir's fowl gut method. Henry Wilkins's medical guide suggested a similar method in which lint dipped in alum water was pulled into the nose with a length of catgut.[17] Wesley suggested a little roll of paper under the tongue.[18]

Preparations of alum and vinegar were snuffed or blown into the nose through a quill. Snuffs were routinely employed for nasal disorders. Polyps were popularly treated by snuffing powdered alum or bloodroot powder.[19] Lenoir took the following suggestion from the March 28, 1817, *Raleigh Star:*

A Safe and easy Cure for the Polyphus in the Nose

Take the root called blood root dry and Powder it and use it as snuff the efficacy of this medicine hath been proven in Vermont & Virginia, NB. Docters had said they knew of no cure but by extraction which was painful & dangerous.

Ln

Inhalation of vinegar fumes was part of George Washington's treatment during his final illness. This recommendation for combating nasal congestion followed Buchan's *Domestic Medicine:*

to open & Moysten ye head

hold ye nose over Sharp Vinegar that is pord on a hot Iron or in a hot Melting Ladle and Receive ye Steem up the nose.

Al

Mouth and Teeth

"Keeping the teeth clean has no doubt a tendency to prevent the toothache." According to Buchan, "The best method is to wash them daily with salt and water, or with cold water alone." Wesley agreed, recommending rinsing the mouth with cold water every morning and after every meal. According to *The Compleat Housewife,* brandy was a beneficial addition to mouthwash. [20] Pinckney's book of cures included an equally simple mouthwash.

For a Tooth Ach

Take a jugg of water and put a few red hott coals into it and wash the mouth often with it.

Pk

Charcoal and ashes seem to have had wide use in mouthwashes and dentifrices.

For Decayed Teeth & Toothache

Clean your teeth at least three times a week with powdered fire coal burnt from wood & frequently whilst the pain lasts.

SC

to clean the teeth

Rub them With ye ashes of Burnt Bread.

Al

Wesley recommended for dentifrices the use of bread ashes, as copied into the Allen manuscript, and tobacco ashes. The latter is curious, because Wesley warned that smoking tobacco was injurious to the teeth. However, Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* listed tobacco, smoked or chewed, among herbs helpful in treating toothache. Peter Kalm wrote, "There is hardly an old woman but can tell you three or four scores" of remedies for toothache. One of the remedies he mentioned employed tobacco. For a hollow tooth, a little cotton was put at the bottom of a pipe. The pipe was filled with tobacco and smoked. The hot cotton impregnated with tobacco was then applied to the tooth. [21]

Tobacco was also used for the teeth in the form of snuff. This practice met with opposition, however, according to one eastern North Carolina source: "I am convinced the practice of cleaning the teeth with snuff is extremely injurious to her health. . . . It is a habit which is hard to break like tobacco chewing." This 1812 letter went on to describe a regimen for gradually cutting down on the amount of snuff used each day and for maintaining the teeth by using "green dogwood sticks to make brushes of without tobacco at all."[22]

Nearly fifty years earlier, Thomas Anburey reported, "for the want of such necessary implements as tooth-brushes, we substitute [dogwood]." But Buchan warned that "brushing and scraping of the teeth is dangerous, and, unless it be performed with great care, does mischief." Buchan was not alone in questioning the safety of brushing the teeth. In *Letters to Ladies,* Thomas Ewell wrote, "No tooth-brush is necessary, the finger answers sufficiently for rubbing; but if you will have a tooth-brush, let it be of the softest kind . . . a piece of sponge tied at the end of a stick, answers very well; as does a linen rag. Nothing can be more destructive to the gums and teeth than a stiff hair brush."[23]

Contrary to the advice of the respected Drs. Buchan and Ewell, many sources recommended brushing the teeth. Two exotic gums, myrrh and dragon's blood, were included in Eliza Smith's domestic recipes for tooth powder. Mastic, another gum, was recommended for filling a hollow tooth.[24] The rather exotic tincture given below combined all three of these ingredients. Although this receipt fit well into period traditions, the manuscript author crossed it out and marked it "not good."

> Tincture for preserving Teeth
>
> Take two ounces of Myrrh two ounces of mastick put them into a pipkin with five pints of Water & one handful of salt boil it more than two Hours over a gentle fire stirring it all the time then put into it two ounces of Dragons Blood & let it boil half an hour afterward. Let it stand a Day or two to settle then pour it into Bottles & wash your Mouth night & morn with a Brush.
>
> PD

If a toothache developed, William Byrd could "recommend no medicine but Patience." Others recommended a plethora of remedies. "Nutmeg, scraped, & put into a hollow Tooth, gave immediate Relief," according to the Ebenezer Hazard's journal of 1777–78. A clove of garlic on the tooth was Wesley's choice. Both of these treatments fit Buchan's assertion that "bitter, hot, and pungent things" eased toothache by increasing saliva flow. Buchan also suggested a pill of camphor and opium packed into an aching tooth. *The Compleat Housewife* offered "A good Remedy for a hollow aching Tooth" that added clove oil to the combination of camphor and opium. [25] Lenoir reported that another filling for a hollow aching tooth was severe in its operation:

> Tooth-Ach, . . . to kill a Tooth . . .
>
> Mr. Pickens says take quick lime vizt.—unslaked lime,—(to wit) Burn an Oyster Shell (or Mussle shell) & scrap it or beat it fine mix it with Tallow or bees-wax & put it in the hollow of the tooth & it will so affect the Artery as to destroy all Censations . . . & therefore I suppose would cure the tooth ach.
>
> Ln

In addition to packing the afflicted tooth with a medication, warm poultices were applied to the jaw. According to Buchan, bags filled with boiled chamomile flowers or elder flowers were proper applications for toothache, as for earache. Kalm recorded that the Iroquois used elder-bark poultices. Wesley chose bruised or boiled nettles for a poultice to the cheek.[26]

Hot cornmeal mush was a convenient application to an aching jaw. Kalm noted the popularity of a poultice of cornmeal, milk, and lard spread on cloth and applied to the swollen cheek.[27] Herbs could also have been added, as in the toothache remedy below. Lenoir noted that one man found this treatment twice effectual.

> Cure for Tooth Ach,
>
> Boil the weed called life ever-lasting pretty strong & make a Poultice of it by thickening the water it was boiled in with any kind of meal perhaps corn-meal may be best & apply that Poltice to the Jaw—with some-thing between said poultice and the Jaw to keep it from drawing the skin off, in nature of a blister plaister.
>
> Ln

If medicating the tooth and warm applications to the jaw failed, more exotic remedies might be attempted before resorting to pulling the tooth. One suggestion was an irritant put into the ear:

For Tooth ache . . .

take a little flower [flour] the same quantity of pepper tye them in a fine rag & dip it in Brandy put it in to the Ear & lie down on that side.

PD

The Moravian surveyor, Reuter, recorded an Indian cure for toothache: a "Rattle-snake tooth which is not poisonous, that is when the Snake was killed before it became angry, is used by the Indians for tooth-ache; they stick the tooth with it." A rattlesnake fang is indeed the perfect size and shape to use as a dental pick, and perhaps the Doctrine of Signatures was considered in this use of a snake's tooth to cure a human tooth. [28]

Tooth extraction lay in the realm of the lay practitioner. As Buchan put it, "Tooth-drawing, like bleeding, is very much practiced by mechanics as well as persons of the medical profession." He stressed the attendant dangers, however—"breaking the jaw-bone, or . . . drawing a sound tooth instead of a rotten one."[29]

For a woman afflicted with a toothache of six months duration "accompanied sometimes with a headache which made her deranged," tooth extraction was certainly indicated. "We endeavoured to relieve it by extracting two of her teeth, but without any success.—I was somewhat apprehensive that her jaw was carious. We have however extracted a third tooth which I am satisfied occasioned her trouble, as she has had no return of the pain."[30]

The eye, ear, nose, and mouth long remained realms where home practice and self-medication ruled. Many of the remedies suggested two centuries ago remained in popular use into the twentieth century. While the dangers attached to many ingredients in early eye-water formulas are apparent, some of the treatments for ear, nose, and tooth care still seem reasonable. However, although stopping nosebleed with chicken gut or using charcoal to clean the mouth may be sound practices, they are not likely to be used any longer.

Chapter 10—
Poisoning

The toxic chemical components of certain minerals and plants, the venom of snakes and insects, and the bacterial and viral toxins of hydrophobia and venereal diseases were considered as a group. Similar treatment was recommended for all classes of poisons, but mineral and vegetable poisons required an emetic in addition to basic therapies.

Mineral and Vegetable Poisons

William Buchan named arsenic, cobalt, and the corrosive sublimate of mercury as examples of dangerous minerals. He listed poppy (opium), hemlock, henbane, and berries of deadly nightshade as typical vegetable poisons. [1] With the exception of cobalt, each of these poisons found use in medical preparations, although the dangers attendant to each were recognized.

Internal poisoning was treated with emetics. John Wesley listed oily emetic mixtures for counteracting "Cholic from the fumes of lead, or white lead, verdigrease, etc." and for the "Palsy" resulting from working with these poisonous substances. Victims of internal poisoning were encouraged to drink large quantities of milk or water mixed with salad oil or melted butter. Fatty broths served the same purpose. These oily draughts were continued until the patient vomited and the stomach was emptied.[2]

Certain herbs were considered helpful in counteracting poisons, internally and externally. The 1764 inventory of plants in the piedmont North Carolina Wachovia tract included angelica as a reputed antidote for poison. Horehound was listed in use against poison and rattlesnake bite. Christian Gottlieb Reuter noted that horehound was part of "Caesar's Cure," an antipoison preparation developed by a slave.[3]

Although the simple preparation of plantain and horehound seems unremarkable, Caesar was well rewarded for his discovery. He was set free by the South Carolina General Assembly and allotted £100 per year for duration of his life.[4]

Caesar's Cure enjoyed an exceptionally lengthy and widespread popularity, as evidenced by a newspaper dipping pasted into a circa 1806–16 commonplace book (SC) from the South Carolina lowcountry. That version of the cure was

reprinted from the May 9, 1750, *Carolina Gazette*. Knowledge of Caesar's Cure in the backcountry settlements persisted as well. More than fifty years after the cure was mentioned in the Moravian journal, William Lenoir attributed the receipt, with accompanying instructions on regimen, to Lucas's almanac of 1816.

> Negroe Cesar's Cure for Poison . . .
>
> Take the Roots of plantain and hoarhound fresh or dried 3 ounces boil them together in two quarts of water to one quart and strain it of this decoction let the patient take one third part three mornings fasting successively, from which if he finds any relief it must be continued till he is perfectly recovered; on the Contrary if he finds no Alteration after the first dose it is a sign that the patient has either not been poisoned at all, or that it is such a poison as Cesars antidotes will not Remedy (so may leave off the decoction). . . .
> NB. the plantain or hoarhound will either of them cure alone but they are more efficacious together—
> In summer you may take one handfull of roots and branches of each in place of three ounces of the roots of each
> for drink during the Cure take of the roots of Golden rods six ounces or in Summer two large handfull of roots & branches together and boil them in two quarts of water, to one quart, (to which also may be added a little hoarhound & Sassafras) To this decoctions after it is strained add a glass of rum or brandy and sweeten it with sugar for ordinary drink—
>
> Ln

Animal Poisons: Bites of Snake, Mad Dog, Spider, and Insect

Caesar's cure for snakebite utilized the same ingredients as his poison remedy, although the method of preparation was different.

Snakebite

> Negroe Cesars cure for the bite of a Rattle Snake
>
> Take the roots of plantain or hoarhound (in Summer and branches together) in a Sufficient quantity, bruise them in a morter and Squeeze out the Juice of which as soon as possible take one Spoonfull; if he is Swelled you must force it down his throat. This generally will Cure; but if the patient finds no relief in an hour after, you may give an other Spoonful, which never fails; If the roots are dried they must be moistened with a little water.
>
> Ln

Plantain, used alone, had long enjoyed a widespread reputation in treatment of animal poisons. According to Joseph Doddridge, "the white plantain held a high rank" for the cure of snakebites when boiled in milk and administered internally. [5] Lenoir added the following note to Caesar's snakebite cure: "A worthy & respectable Physician said that for forty years he had been in the habit in such Cases of Administering the Juice of the Green plantain & he had never known a single instance of its failing to afford Relief to persons bit by Snakes, he had given it, when the Sufferer was appearently in the Agonies of death, and when Considerable force was required to open the mouth, & Relief was almost instantanious." Lenoir offered further instructions for preparing and administering this remedy: "the plantain must be brused & the Juice pressed out, & that given as soon as possible after the bite—but it is never too late to give it while the Sufferer is alive, after pressing out the Juice the plantain may be boiled in milk & that also given to the patient."

A miscellany of native plants were termed *snakeroots*. Reuter's 1764 inventory listed fourteen botanical treatments for snakebite, eight of them called *snakeroots*. Three wild herbs, seneca snakeroot, Robert's (Robin's) plantain, and fern snakeroot were commended "the best Snakeroot," and many of these plants were thought beneficial for a variety of complaints in addition to snakebite. Reuter noted, "Practically all plants which the Indians are known to use as medicine are called 'Snakeroot.'" Black snakeroot, Samson's snakeroot, Virginia or heart snakeroot, rattlesnake root, grass snakeroot, and ipecacuanha were remedies of great note. The reputation of each snakeroot was partly based on a signature—the root appearing snakelike. In addition, native American species were considered most likely to cure problems specific to this country, such as the bite of indigenous snakes.[6]

Reuter wrote, "Andrew Cross is a Snakeroot, which like all Snakeroots is most efficacious when boiled in milk and drunk and also applied externally." John Tennent and Thomas Johnson also recommended the wild hypericum, or Saint Andrew's cross. In *Every Man His Own Doctor,* Tennent wrote, "The readiest Cure I know, is St. Andrew's Cross, which grows providentially all over the Woods, during the Whole Season that the Snakes are mischievous."[7]

Other plants in addition to those dubbed *snakeroot* were tried on snakebite victims. Both the piedmont North Carolina Moravians[8] and coastal Carolinians considered ash "protection against snakes" in the 1760s.

> To Cure the Bight of a snake
>
> Take the Inside of the Barke of an Ash Tree & Beate it & git about 2 or 3 Spunfull of the & swollow it Which is a Sure Remadey.
>
> BI

The Moravians considered elder cooked in milk an appropriate internal dose, with the residue applied to the bite, and other herbal poultices were also employed. Lenoir's book of remedies suggested a "leaf of good tobacco moistened

with Rum." In Doddridge's community, boiled chestnut leaves were applied to snakebites. [9]

More than half of Doddridge's chapter "Diseases and Their Remedies" was devoted to treatment for snakebite. He questioned the effectiveness of internal medicines for this problem: "They are harmless substances which do wonders in all those cases in which there is nothing to be done."[10]

Common treatments for snakebite were outlined in a 1787 Salem, North Carolina, diary. One of the Moravian brethren bitten in the hand by a rattlesnake tried three remedies: "A few days before he had heard a man from the Catawba River recommend a treatment for such a case, so he moistened a little cooking salt with water, and held the wounded hand in it, which relieved the worst pain, and the hand did not swell much. [Those who came to his assistance] killed the rather large snake and laid some of its fat on the wound, bandaged the hand tightly above the bite, and gave him a drink made of bitter herbs." This bitter draught may have been Caesar's Cure.[11]

Snake oil was widely esteemed as a snakebite remedy. Tennent's and Buchan's domestic medical guides advocated the use of the snake's fat on the wound. Doddridge detailed this treatment: "The body of the snake was cut into pieces of about two inches in length, split open in succession, and laid on the wound to draw out the poison." Unlike some practitioners, Tennent believed that the fat would sheathe the poison rather than draw it out.[12]

Other fats were also employed. Wesley advocated common oil, while Buchan mentioned salad oil. Both may have been referring to olive oil (sweet oil), a common import. Buchan believed that it was safer to suction the wound before applying the oil: "The practice of sucking out poisons is very ancient; and indeed nothing can be more rational." Among the remedies for snakebite known to Doddridge were "Cupping, sucking the wound, and making deep incisions which were filled with salt and gun powder." A French naturalist, Palisot de Beauvois, traveling among the Indians in 1796 noted, "In the first moment of the bite [the Cherokees] use three kinds of remedies: the suction which is always the most effective when it is possible to employ, or chewed tobacco applied to the wound or cannon powder to which one sets afire." These measures were followed with herbal remedies: a kind of sunflower that Palisot had "not yet well determined," *Prenanthes alba* (rattlesnake root), root bark of the tulip poplar, and *Spiraea trifoliata* (probably *Gillenia trifoliata*, or Indian physic). The two-way sharing of medical knowledge between Indian and European traditions is thoroughly apparent in these remedies.[13]

Bite of Mad Dog

A wide assortment of cures were proposed against hydrophobia, although the "cure" was successful only when the supposed mad dog was not truly rabid. Confirming the presence of rabies in an animal was often difficult. The general

horehound and plantain dose for poisoning (Caesar's Cure) was employed against the bite of a rabid animal, just as it was used against poison and snakebite.

For the bite of a Mad Dog

Take half a glass of the Juice of wild horehound, and half a glass of Plantain Juice every morning and Evening and at the same time apply some of each well bruised to the Wound. Should it be wanted in the winter when the horehound is dry, it must be made into a strong decoction with the roots and leaves.

Hr

Similar to snakebite treatment, salt or lye was applied to the mad dog bite. Wesley noted the case of a man who was "bit six times by mad dogs, and always cured himself" by bathing the wound in salt water. Buchan agreed with this treatment. [14] Lenoir may have already been familiar with simple salt application but saw fit to copy the following detailed instructions from the April 26, 1811, *Raleigh Register* into his commonplace book of cures:

Cure Hydrophobia (or bite of mad-dog)

Let the person bit by a dog known or supposed to be mad have as soon as possible the wound washed with hot water having as much pearl-ash or pot-ash dissolved in it as possible—This done change the water for another of the same kind, and let the bitten part be kep long in the hot pot-ash water, (or pearl-ash water or strong ashes-ley) let this be repeated as often as the Patient can bear or as conveniently can be done, there will then be no danger-the patient may be considered as cured on the third day.

Where neither pot-ash, pearl-ash, nor strong-ley can be had Common Salt should be used, and the patient should be fed upon nothing but food Saturated to the highest degree with salt as salt fish raw—salt-meat with the addition of fresh salt and if the cure be commenced before the patient has taken an aversion to liquids, salt water should be his drink.

Ln

Perhaps best-known for dog bite was Dr. Richard Mead's famous medicine. Two parts powdered liverwort were mixed with one part ground black pepper, divided into four doses and administered in warm milk on four successive mornings. Prevalent theory also dictated the use of mercurial ointments and cold bathing.[15] All three of these methods for treating mad dog bite were combined in Archibald Maclaine's medical notes:

The method of curing a person bitten is first, I wou'd rub into the place wounded, as soon as possible, a Drachm of the Neapolitan oint-

ment, & then wou'd give Turpeth Mineral, by way of vomit. . . . this I wou'd repeat more than once at intervals, which wou'd secure it from raising Salivation, always remembering to rub the wound once a day, or oftner, with the Mercurial ointment. In the meantime I wou'd not omit the Pulvis Antilyssus, consisting of ash-color'd liverwort & pepper, recommended by Dr. Mead.Then let the Patient go into cold water every morning for a month.

Mc

Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* similarly encouraged the use of simultaneous treatments for preventing the onset of hydrophobia. He advised that people should not trust any one remedy although "from a proper combination of their different powers, there is the greatest reason to hope for success." Additionally, Buchan advised the patient to be bled before beginning the round of medications. [16] An anonymous lowcountry manuscript (SC) recommended a drastic phlebotomy in cases of hydrophobia: "Take from the patient, as soon as the symptoms appear about forty ounces of Blood after which he may drink water . . . [repeat 8 or 10 oz blood letting if needed] . . . mercury and opium may also be administered."

The more desperate the malady, the more exotic the attempt at cure. Hydrophobia was incurable by any means available, and treatments were therefore often bizarre as well as heroic. Chapter 14 contains a discussion of charms and incantations in use against mad dog bite—madstones to absorb the poison, magic words to drive away the evil.

Spider and Insect Bites and Stings

Common kitchen remedies for stings included honey or treacle (molasses), oil, or sometimes vinegar. Certain of these applications were purely preventive, while others were meant to be curative. "Bear's Oyle" was commonly employed as insect repellent among Indians and settlers. An assortment of herbal poultices were suggested to relieve pain or itching.[17]

A black-and-red spider bit the lip of a visitor to the North Carolina Moravian settlements in 1765. "He soon swelled, and for many hours lay speechless and unconscious, and nearly died; the juice of Robert Planting, the herb for poisons, had done him good service." On another occasion a spider bite to the foot was treated by bloodletting: "His limb became burning hot, and there was oppression on the chest, and it was necessary to open a vein."[18]

A Cure, if you are Stung, by anething

take bluestone, put it in a linnen cloth, dip it in water, and apply it, to the part, that has been Stung.

Sm

The severe itching caused by imbedded seed ticks (chiggers) was treated with tobacco. Thomas Anburey advised, "Fumigate the parts affected with tobacco,

which penetrating the pores, destroys the insects," echoing measures taken by Moravian settlers. In addition to smoking the place with tobacco, the sufferer might rub chigger bites with green tobacco leaves or wild indigo: "Unless something is done restless nights follow." Byrd suggested rubbing the skin with pennyroyal to fend off chiggers or to ease the discomfort. [19]

Bedbugs and fleas were familiar annoyances in eighteenth-century homes. Peter Kalm noted the use of sassafras bedposts to discourage bedbugs and highly recommended sulfur to repel vermin.[20] Turpentine was similarly employed, as in this method:

> An efficacious receipt for distroying Bugs, by an eminent physician—for the Pennsylvania Chronicle 16. may 1768
>
> Take of the highest rectified spirit of wine (viz. lamp spirits) that will burn away all dry, and leave not the least moisture behind, half a pint, spirit of turpentine half a pint, mix them together, and with a piece of sponge or a brush wet very well the bed or furniture wherein those vermin harbour or breed and it will infallible kill and destroy both them and their nits, although they swarm ever so much.
>
> Mc

This measure against bedbugs was widely known. Two similar receipts include half an ounce of camphor dissolved in the turpentine and alcohol mixture. Hannah Glasse's famous *Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* guided readers to fumigate a seriously infested room by burning sulfur and pepper and then wetting the bedstead with the above solution or filling cracks in the wood with a mercury preparation.[21]

Venereal Diseases

Following eighteenth-century custom, venereal diseases fit into this chapter on poisons. Indeed, this class of afflictions was frequently dubbed "venereal poison."

To eighteenth-century practitioners, differences between gonorrhea and confirmed lues or the pox (syphilis) were unclear. Disagreement existed about whether yaws was venereal or nonvenereal.

Throughout the decades covered by this study, commonly accepted treatment for venereal complaints involved bleeding and purging followed by a mercury preparation—internally or in an ointment—alternated with additional purgatives. Herbal decoctions were employed in mild cases or in conjunction with mercury.

Maclaine's receipt for curing venereal disease followed the mainstream tradition with mercury ointment to be applied each night: "If done before a fire, it will have ye speedier effect." A purge was recommended every third day. Following the course of mercury doses, turpentine pills completed the treatment. A desperate letter to Dr. Calvin Jones from a western North Carolina lay practitioner documented similar notions of treatment still prevalent in 1810: "I never intended

to do any thing in respect to Venereal Complaints"; however, miscalculating the efficacy of a local herb doctor's plants, he found himself "oblig'd to assist him in a number of Instances of obstinate Gonorhea with mercurial preparations. . . . I am for want of more proper information treating them in the manner recommended by Buchan with the common Mercurial pills taking care to allay the inflamation by cooling purges, bleedings, &c. . . . I am fearful the quantity of mercury administered will be injurious, Some having been in a tolerable hight State of Salivation 2 months. . . . In 2 or 3 cases I am trying Corosive Sublate of Mercury." [22]

A simple mercurial preparation, often called blue ointment, was compounded by rubbing together equal quantities of hog's lard and quicksilver (mercury). Turpentine was a common additive.[23] The Allen manuscript included instructions for an internal dose of mercury in alcoholic solution: "Corrosive Sublimate of Mercuri is used thus Disolve one grain in 4 table Spoonfulls of good Rum or Spirits take one Spoonfull twise a day."

Sarsaparilla was considered one of the best herbal treatments. The related china root was also "extolled for curing the venereal disease," as were the roots of burdock and soapwort and the woods of guaiacum and sassafras.[24]

> Cure for the Venereal
>
> Take a Dose of Salts in the Morning-and in the evening take as follows
>
> Take one Ounce of Saltpetre one Ounce of Allum a piece of BlueStone as big as a large Pea a Double handfull of black haw-roots—a Small quantity of Chaney [China?] roots—(said to grow in fields) a half a bushel of pine Tops—All Boiled together in half a bushel of water till it comes to 2 quarts—and take a Gill three times a day.
>
> Ln

This receipt, acquired from an old woman, was said to have cured one John Mise "when nothing else would do it." Bloodroot, or puccoon, was reputed to work the cure as well: "Puckoon Root taken internally (it is said) will cure the Venereal when nothing else will." Lenoir further noted, "the Puckoon Root is called the Mercury root."

The debate over the places of origin of the various forms of syphilis has not yet been fully resolved. Was the virulent new form of venereal syphilis that raged in sixteenth-century Europe an American import? Or did a mutation in the older European disease or a combination of two types of syphilis, one from America and one from Europe, lead to this serious outbreak? There were also three types of nonvenereal syphilis to contend with.

Two receipts among manuscript sources (Al, Hr) indicated concern with yaws, the tropical form of nonvenereal syphilis. Yaws, is thought to have been brought to America from Africa, although John Lawson found a long-standing

similar disorder among Carolina Indians (probably the type of syphilis known as *pinta*). Differentiation among these related diseases was difficult. [25]

Unclean and primitive living conditions, weakness due to other illness, and poor diet contributed to the spread of yaws and other nonvenereal forms of syphilis. The Carolina diet, heavy in pork, was partially blamed for the incidence of yaws among rural inhabitants. Byrd noted making "a Carolina dinner upon fresh pork, though we had a plate of green peas after it by way of desert, for the safety of our Noses" (deterioration of the nose was a common manifestation of nonvenereal syphilis). Among the Santee Indians, Lawson observed "no-nose Doctors" who prescribed the juice of the tulip tree to cure others of the distemper.[26]

Yaws was alternately known as *country distemper* or *lame distemper*. Some practitioners employed mercury against this disease, although herbal remedies and attention to diet may have been more common therapies. In 1729 a Virginia slave, James Papaw, received his freedom for publishing his formula for the cure of yaws and venereal diseases. Papaw's (or Papa's) remedy was widely acclaimed. In addition to its publication in various newspapers, the receipt was included in John Brickell's *Natural History* and John Tennent's *Every Man His Own Doctor*.[27] The Allen commonplace book from Guilford County, North Carolina, reported this remedy along with an added prescription of deer dung and turpentine pills, as in Tennent's volume. The Allen manuscript author's omission of pine bark from Papaw's receipt may have been unintentional.

For the Yaws

The yaws or Countray Distemper is very Bad to Cure perfectly Especily when grown invitred this is the highest kind of Scurvy and the Symtoms of it are Eating Ulcer in the throat or pallet and filthy Sores in other parts of the body having neer Resemblence to those of the pox this unclean Diseas often yeald to Dr. Papas Remedy or at Least may be Cept under by it.
Take one ounce of the Bark of Shomake Root one ounce of the iner [bark of pine, and two ounces of the inner] Bark of Spanish oak boil these together in two quarts of water till the decoction Bee very Strong, of the Liquor drink a full pint milk warm and imeadiately after it half a pint quite cold and it will give thee a powerful vomit the next morning take half a pint of the Same Drink warm and the Same quantity again in the Evening and Continue so doing for Six Weeks or two months only the Vomit must bee Repeated Every Seventh day, in the meantime gargle your throat and wash all your Sores and ulcers with the Same warm Liquor which aught to be made fresh Every two days Besids all this you Must Chew the Shomake Root Very often and Swallow the healing juice
Every night before you go to Rest take two pills made of turpinfine

and Deers dung in Eaquel quantitys
of Eating and Drinking Confine thyself from flesh and from Strong Drink and bee very carefull of Cetching Cold.

Al

The version of this remedy reported in the March 24–31, 1733, *South-Carolina Gazette* gave instructions for preparing and administering the bark decoction as above but concluded with directions for treating the ulcers by washing "with blue Stone Water, anointing them afterwards with Hogs Fat and Deer's Dung, or Hare's Dung."

Several decades later, Harriott Pinckney Horry suggested the use of fowl's dung on the sores of yaws. The following medical receipt may have been entered soon after Horry began her book in 1770. This entry followed five pages of remedies copied from her mother's memoranda, although this cure was not part of Eliza Lucas Pinckney's recipe book.

For the Yaws

A Pint of Smith's Cinders: Brass fileings, Brimstone, Steel fileings, Gun Powder, and Black pepper of each a large Table Spoonfull. Beat or grind all these ingredients very fine and sift them add to them lime juice enough to make it into a past or Ointment, then add to it a little fresh Fowle Dung and let it be all well mix'd to-gether upon an old Hoe.—Make a Bath of an herb or Weed that grows in old fields and particularly on Savanah Bluff which puts out a Yellow Flow'r and bears long pods full of seeds; this weed is to be boil'd in a pot of Water. take a handfull of the weed and some of the Liquor and wash and bath the Patient all over with it till they are well cleansed, then rub all the sores pretty hard with a lime or a bit of rag dip'd in strong vinegar then heat the Ointment upon the old hoe and dip a Feather in it and rub all the sores with it till they almost bleed, it must be made as hot as the Patient can bear it. The patient is to be rub'd twice a Week with this Ointment, being first bath'd and rub'd as before directed, and after being rub'd twice they must be purg'd as follows. Take a small hand full of Rignum [lignum?] and make it into a tea, the dose is to be about a pint, one third of it milk. twice purging is enough and you must let them rest one day between the purges. If limes are not to be had Strong Vinegar will do, but Limes are much the best.

Hr

The conversational tone, the description of a familiar but unnamed local weed, and the mixing and heating of the ointment on an old hoe all suggest that Horry may have collected this receipt from a lowcountry folk doctor, probably of a different social stratum and perhaps an African. This speculation is strength-

ened by the knowledge that Horry took a personal interest in collecting and preserving local medicinal herbs. It is easy to imagine her also collecting receipts from the people who assisted with this work. [28]

Treatment of the assortment of maladies generally regarded as poisons tended toward the exotic. This chapter illustrates the sharing of remedies among Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans. Chapter 14 contains additional treatments for poisons incorporating stronger elements of the exotic and the supernatural.

Chapter 11—
Women's Disorders

Such popular authors as Nicholas Culpeper, William Buchan, and William Smellie advanced the wise opinion that girls and women required exercise and fresh air, wholesome diet, and "spritely amusements" [1] to enjoy good health. Furthermore, these authors advised dietary improvements and exercise for females whose health and spirits declined or whose menses failed to flow.

Menstrual Disorders

When a strengthening regimen failed, Buchan suggested medical treatments—doses of iron, Peruvian bark, or tincture of black hellebore, perhaps accompanied by bloodletting and purging. The following receipt duplicated John Wesley's advice, although the manuscript author cited Dr. Samuel Tissot as the source.

> Menses obstructed
>
> boil five large heads of hemp in a pint of water boil to half—strain it and drink it at going to bed two or three nights, it seldom fails. NB. Let it be used at the regular time as near as can be judged.
>
> Tm

According to the Moravian records, such a beverage made from hemp seed was known as "hemp milk." This remedy contradicted the advice of other authors of the time, who proposed hemp seed to "abate venereal desires" or to "stayeth Bleeding."[2]

William Lenoir reported obstruction of the menses as but one of the problems befallen "Cinder a Girl about 14 years old who Declining several months untill she shrunk away very much before she would agree that she was sick is troubled some with a Cough & look melencholy." In addition, "Nature hath failed to Discharge itself."

> The Cure—Take a handfull of englinsh Bittiny, a small handfull of tuning time (or mother of time) a handfull of hissop—a handfull of Motherwert (or mudwert) & a handful of Featherfew, and put in a Gallon of Water and boil it away to three quarts put in a pint of Whiskey (and may put in a little sugar) stop it up & sit it in a Cool place—and give her a small tea cup full—(or abut 3 tablespoon fulls)

night and morning—if it makes her much sick—like puking may omit giving for some days—the most proper time to give the above medicine is 3 days before and 3 days after the full &: change of the moon—

Ln

This cure, from a Mrs. Gordon, was not successful in Cinder's case. Lenoir noted, "she died Jany 1800 or Decr 1799."

The opposite problem, too great a menstrual flow, was commonly treated with whey. Though it may seem contrary to reason, Wesley and John Tennent advocated bloodletting in cases of menstrual flooding. Most authors agreed that the patient should be kept quiet; "nor must any Part of them, not so much as their Tongue be allow'd to have too much Motion." Buchan and Wesley agreed on the benefit of alum whey as described in John Thompson's commonplace book. [3]

Menses profuse

If the strength will admit take a little blood from the arm the body should be kept open. let her take a tea cupfull of alum whey every three or four hours—made thus: put two drachms of powdered alum in to a pint of milk. boil it till the curd is well separated, then strain off the whey and bottle it; The like medicine in flooding and in the whites has been found often useful, tried.

Tm

Another type of whey formed the base of the following remedy. Straining through blacksmiths' cinders was likely to have added the benefits of iron to the infusion.

For an Inward Bleeding or an Inward Bruise or Hurt

Take a handful of Mugwort and pour a pint of boiling milk upon it and turn it to whey with rough Cyder. Strain it off upon Smiths Cinder let it be stoped close and let the party drink half a pint morning and night.

Pk

Any sort of nonmenstrual uterine flux (flow) was classified as "the whites." The discharge was described as not always white but sometimes yellow, green, or even dark. In other words, "the whites" referred to a variety of women's disorders.

Styptic powder for Whites

Rock Allum 1/2 oz., Dragons blood 2 dra: beat them fine and mix them together, in urgent cases 1/2 dra: may be taken every hour-7 such doses seldom fail to cure. for common cases the dose is a scruple twice a day but it must be given oftner if occasion requires.

Hr

Dragon's blood, an East Indian gum, entered into remedies for various fluxes or discharges. Wesley suggested a powder of alum and dragon's blood for menstrual flooding. Perhaps the Doctrine of Signatures influenced his selection of this red gum to stop excessive bleeding. The case for Wesley's attention to signatures is buttressed by his use of red hollyhocks in a draught for profuse menses and white hollyhocks in a similar drink for the whites. The use of white ingredients only in the two infusions that follow again lends credence to the idea of adherence to the Doctrine of Signatures. [4]

Whites

The white peel of ripe Walnuts dried & powdered a small teaspoonful taken in a morning fasting in half a Cup of white wine.

PD

For the same

White Deal shavings boiled in Milk a gill drank in the morning fasting.

PD

Related to this use of resinous wood shavings was the use of rosin for the whites and other internal disorders as in the receipt below. The *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* similarly recommended use of common turpentine in *fluor albus* (the whites).[5]

For an inward Bruise

Take black rosin beat to a fine powder as much as will lie on a shilling morning & Night in Wine this is good for a pain in the side & the Whites.

PD

From the same South Carolina lowcountry memorandum book of the mid-1700s came the following treatment. More charm than medicine, this little ritual is not duplicated in other period sources. Which type of "flow of Nature" the treatment was meant to abate is unclear.

To abate a flow of Nature

Mulberry Leaves bruised and tied round the wrist at the full of the Moon.

PD

Disorders of women's fluxes were often linked to greensickness, or chlorosis. This severe anemia was a type of cachexia, a general term for nutritional deficiencies accompanying serious diseases. An iron tonic commonly worked wonders in such cases. Wesley suggested a simple dose of steel filings and sugar for greensickness,[6] and Lenoir recorded the following formula for simple iron tincture to correct cachexia.

For Kickhicsey—(a lingering Disorder)

To a pint of Vinager add as much Nails as it will Cover, in an Iron or unglased vessel let it remain untill it acquires nearly a black Colour take out the nails and add an equal Quantity of Spirits, (a pugil or) as much snakeroot as you can lightly hold between your thumb and forefinger, and one Rase of Ginger pounded simper the whole together slowly untill it evaporates one third then filter it and add a pound of brown sugar, and simper it again till it acquires the consistancy of thick Molasses—
NB. a Dose is one teaspoonful every morning fasting
a strong purge to be taken previous to taking the aforesaid tincture.
A Remedy for the Cachexy or Green Sickness

Ln

George Hays's Cure for lingering Sickness

Take half an ounce of Alloways, and half an ounce of Camphor, a Spoonfull of Salt-petre and a Spoonful of Coppares, & put in a quart of Rye whiskey & shake it, Take a spoonful, Morning, noon & night—& may Eat or drink any thing but sweet-milk.

Ln

Lenoir also noted, "on 5th Feby 1806 I was speaking to Dr. Jas. Chs. ORiley about the above & he said the Copperas would do as well alone." Since *copperas* is the common name for iron sulfate, the doctor was probably correct. Copperas in whiskey would constitute a simple iron tonic.

Lenoir's source, James Davidson, claimed that the following iron and herb decoction (dated 1814) would "cure children that hath eaten dirt" (eating dirt was an indication of one type of cachexy).

Cure for Dropsey or Kickhicsay—also to occation a passage & prevent inward fevers &c.

take a Gallon of strong Vinager—put in Sassafras roots white plantin, Rattleweed-root, Stare-grass-root, Polly-Pody; hart leef root & top,—Maiden's hair, top twigs of pine, Rusty iron, & simper it away over a moderate fire to about three Gills take a spoon full each morning and abstain from eating as long as conveniently can, take two spoonfuls every evening & eat no supper, If it makes the Patient too Sick he may take less in the morning at first.

Ln

The following additional medicines for cachexia were intended for sick persons or for the pale disorder among children. The first receipt was for a basic

herb-and-iron pill. The second, a more drastic method, combined chicken manure, ginger root, and chicken gizzards with the iron.

this for Six parsons a cure for the pail disorder in Amung Children . . .

take a double hand full of worrom wood & half as Much Rue & three ounces of Steel dust & powder them & Mix them up in pils with Molloses or brown Shuger & take them for two days one in the Morning one be four denor & one be four you go to bed—
again take 6 Ruts of Ginger & 6 Chickens giserds & a thimbel ful of white hen dung & 2 ounces of anvel dust Grind them togather & Mix them as above & take one pil Every third day. [7]

A simple centaury tea recommended for greensickness by "Mrs. Myddleton" was noted in a lowcountry commonplace book (PD). This remedy followed the old herbalists' tradition. Both Culpeper and John Gerard cataloged centaury as an Italian cure for greensickness and dropsy.[8]

The following receipts were aimed at preventing miscarriage. Yarrow had a long reputation in curbing bleeding and other fluxes—discharges of all kinds, internal and external—including too profuse menses and the whites.[9]

Abortion

take as much yarrow as you can grasp between your finger and thumb and boil it in one point of warter and boil it down to one half pint and let the patient drink it cool and beat the leaves of blood work [wort?] and apply it to the back.

Tm

To prevent Miscarriages

Take 1 gr. Ippa. divide it into 8 parts & give 1 part every 2 hours.

Hr

Childbirth and Midwifery

During the period covered by this study, the practice of midwifery remained primarily in the hands of women, especially in rural areas and among the less affluent. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, many male physicians had added obstetrics to their practices. Doctors were likely to be called to assist with difficult labors rather than with regular deliveries. Male practitioners' attendance at childbirth gained favor with upper-class women in larger coastal communities before the trend spread to the backcountry settlements. Among common folk, the female midwife continued to be preferred for many years into the nineteenth century.[10]

One early specialist in obstetrics was John Moultrie, a mid-eighteenth-century Charleston physician. Dr. David Ramsay wrote that Moultrie's death in 1771 "was regretted as a great public calamity; several of the ladies of Charleston bedewed his grave with their tears. . . . The year after his decease was distinguished by the deaths of several women in childbirth." [11]

An itinerant Anglican minister, Charles Woodmason, was reluctandy pressed into medical service on occasion. Traveling through the South Carolina upcountry in 1768, he noted in his journal the "lucky Circumstance for a Poor Woman . . . who was in Labour, and could get but two Women, and no Midwife, to attend her. By my Care and skill she was happily deliv'd."[12]

"I should be glad to have one of the best Authors upon Midwifry," wrote a gentleman living near Ninety-Six, South Carolina, in 1766 to his brother, a doctor in London.[13] Personal libraries commonly included a volume on midwifery among medical references. Such works were consulted by both doctors and domestic practitioners.

One of the most popular authors on midwifery was Dr. William Smellie, who not only wrote on the subject but personally instructed hundreds of practitioners in the obstetric arts. In contrast, another midwifery author, Thomas Denman, joined popular medical writers Buchan and Thomas Ewell in condemning the employment of male physicians in obstetrical cases. In *Letters to Ladies*, Ewell advocated the need "to wrest the practice of midwifery from the hands of men, and transfer it to women, as it was in the beginning, and ever should be." Ewell sought to educate women about their own bodies while preparing them to assist others during childbirth and lying-in.[14]

The best advice offered by these authors was the admonition to interfere as little as possible with the natural birth process: "nature does the whole business for you . . . if you would merely preserve sense enough to let her operate without your fears, or the meddling of others."[15] Patience was undoubtedly among the greatest assets of a good midwife.

In contrast, while acknowledging that "Nature, if left to herself will generally expel the foetus," Buchan was concerned that women were "often hurt by the superstitious prejudices of ignorant and officious midwives. The mischief done in this way . . . might be prevented by allowing no women to practice midwifery but such as are properly qualified." Buchan condemned women who took up midwifery simply for profit—when "reduced to the necessity of doing it for bread. Hence not one in a hundred of them have any education, or proper knowledge of their business." Not only would education of women in midwifery save lives "but would prevent the necessity of employing men in this indelicate and disagreeable branch of medicine, which is . . . more proper for the other sex."[16]

Buchan cautioned not only against male midwives but also against "that ridiculous custom . . . of collecting a number of women together on such occasions. These, instead of being useful, serve only to crowd the house, and obstruct the necessary attendants. Besides, they hurt the patient with their noise; and often, by

their untimely and impertinent advice, do much mischief." In difficult cases, though, Buchan conceded that a "skilful surgeon" or "man midwife" should be called. Contrary to Buchan's opinion, additional women in attendance during childbirth might serve a variety of useful purposes. Carefully selected friends and relatives could bolster patients' spirits, tend to household duties, and assist midwives. [17]

Custom was likely to bend to necessity in frontier situations. In 1756 a Moravian couple was called to assist an outsider, a German neighbor whose wife was in labor. This couple may have been qualified by experience or simply by willingness to help.[18]

Training and standards for midwives varied widely. In the early days of settlement, experience was the principal teacher. In 1774, when there was no midwife in Salem, the doctor's wife, Sister Bonn, was directed to attend a Moravian sister with the understanding that if the birth were successful, Sister Bonn would be appointed midwife. She apparently succeeded, because the Salem diaries document her long service to women in their travail (labor in childbed). In addition, it was decided that Dr. Bonn should "teach her to do other minor surgical work . . . to bind slight wounds, and the like." Such combination of the roles of midwife, doctor, and nurse was customary. The experiences of Sister Bonn and other dedicated southern midwives were likely quite similar to those recorded in Martha Ballard's 1785–1812 diary from Maine.[19]

Sister Bonn was not the only midwife in her area. In 1782, during a particularly difficult labor, a midwife, Sister Hauser, from nearby Bethabara was called in to assist. A brief diary entry painted a heartrending and typical scene of friends gathered to lend support to a woman in childbed: "Soon after noon a little daughter was born to Sr. Broesing, who had been in labor for twice twenty-four hours. . . . As the child was weak, the heat oppressive, and most of the married Sisters there, others gathered and the child was baptised." The diarist did not report whether mother and child survived. Another midwife, Sister Schaub, served outsiders who sought refuge in the Moravian community of Bethabara: "As everybody loved her she was also called into other homes in the neighborhood. She did the same service for members, when it was requested."[20]

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, formal training for midwives became commonly available for women as well as for men. In 1795 Dr. Samuel Vierling of Salem expressed willingness "to give instruction in midwifery free of charge" to local women. An announcement in a 1798 newspaper further illustrated the new trend. In offering her services "to the Ladies of Wilmington [North Carolina] and its vicinity," Agnes MacKinlay, midwife, declared that she possessed a certificate earned through attending a course of lectures on midwifery and assisting at "a variety of Labours" at Glasgow's Lying-in Hospital.[21]

For the majority of those practicing midwifery, practical experience and domestic medical guidebooks offered basic knowledge and advice. For example, although Buchan advocated allowing nature to proceed, when natural labor proved tedious or difficult he suggested, "to prevent inflammations, it will be proper to

bleed. An emollient clyster ought likewise frequently to be administered; and the patient should sit over steams of warm water. The passage ought to be gently rubbed with a little soft pomatum or fresh butter, and cloths wrung out of warm water applied over the belly. If Nature seems to sink, and the woman is greatly exhausted with fatigue, a draught of generous wine, or some other cordial may be given, but not otherwise." [22]

The private and personal details of childbirth were seldom recorded, but Smellie's writings provide insight into likely common practices in the early American South. The birthing position may have varied according to personal preference but was probably dictated by tradition. Smellie noted that the German and Dutch custom was to use a special chair, and "In the West Indies and some parts of Britain, the woman is seated on a stool made in form of a semicircle; in other places she is placed on a woman's lap; and some, kneeling on a large cushion, are delivered backwards." The French position was that of half sitting and half lying on the bed. In the London method for birthing, which Smellie considered "very convenient," the woman lay on her side with legs bent and a pillow between her knees, a position that Ewell also endorsed.[23]

Ideally, the lying-in bed was to be dressed with a piece of oiled cloth or sheepskin "to preserve the feather bed from being wetted or soiled" and several layers of linen topped with covers appropriate to the season. The patient was clothed in "a short or half shift, a linen skirt or petticoat open before, and a bedgown." A change of linens and clothing was in readiness for the woman following delivery.[24]

The duties of midwives or other attendants began in earnest after delivery. The mother was to remain quietly in bed for a week or more, gradually increasing activity. Her attendants saw that she was kept clean, warm, and nourished. *Letters to Ladies* stressed cleanliness in so much detail as to make it apparent that Ewell felt it necessary to convince his readers of the benefit of the novel idea of bathing.[25]

The dread that childbed fever (puerperal fever) engendered is obvious in the desperate treatments recommended. As in other serious fevers, this frequently fatal infection was treated with the entire arsenal—bleeding, sweating, blistering, purging, and vomiting.[26]

The Breasts

A female caregiver also assisted the new mother and infant in establishing lactation. If the breasts became inflamed, advice was readily available. Several of the southern commonplace books included poultices or salves for sore or swollen breasts.

Putting the newborn to breast at once was recommended. "It wants nothing else; the milk is its physic and its best nourishment." The benefits of breast-feeding, to mother as well as baby, were recognized.[27]

To make a child take to the Breast

a strong dish of Coffee make as sweet as syrup rub the Nipple with this every time the child is put to it.

PD

Applications of butter, beeswax, or oil soothed chapped nipples. Sore, swollen, or hard breasts were treated with warm applications. Wesley suggested a poultice of mashed roasted turnips mixed with rose oil. Ewell recommended warm applications of milk and bread. The Thompson manuscript included the following receipt borrowed from Wesley. [28]

Sore breast and swelled

boil a handful of camomile, and as much mallow in milk and warter. Foment with it between two flannels as hot as can be borne every twelve hours—also desolves any knot or swelling in any part where there is no inflammation.

Tm

The application of warm chamomile and mallows to sore breasts mirrored soothing treatments for earache and toothache. Two receipts for preparing herbal breast creams appeared in the personal manuscripts consulted:

[———] for a Sore Brest

Take Cream, Camamile Large Lavandar, Howlick [houseleek] (small) and Burnet small quantity and stude all Together for the Space of 2 or 3 Aurars Tele it Becoms a Save.

Bl

For a rising [abscess, tumor, boil] in the Breast

Take a double handfull of Feverfew, and Stew it well in Cream, and apply it as a poultice. It generally disperses, or rub up a lump of Camphor with hogs lard & rub the swelling with it.

Hr

Another lowcountry source (SC) suggested 1/8 oz of Camphor—1/2 oz Castile Soap—1 oz of rancid Butter made into a plaister" for "a rise Breast." Camphor was commonly used externally to diminish inflammations and tumors, and it is impossible to know whether this treatment was intended for the temporary discomfort of a nursing mother or a cancer or other lump in the breast.[29]

Among general cures for sores or cancers, several receipts specifically mentioned sore or swollen breasts (see chapter 8). Figs, bluestone, and a green ointment

composed of multiple herbs and dung were recommended. In desperate cases, professional practitioners even attempted breast amputation (see chapter 13).

However sketchy the details, it is apparent that obstetric and gynecological practice was generally in the hands of "old wives." Although in 1800 Dr. Ramsay of Charleston considered midwifery brought "to such a degree of perfection, that farther improvements, are scarcely to be expected," [30] the ensuing two centuries have brought tremendous health advancements for mother and newborn alike.

Chapter 12—
Nervous Diseases

Melancholy, low spirits, hysteric and hypochondriac affections, palsy, epilepsy, hiccups, swoonings, cramps, and flatulences fell into the category of nervous diseases. William Buchan declared such afflictions "the most complicated and difficult to cure. . . . They imitate almost every disease; and are seldom alike in two different persons, or even in the same person at different times. . . . Nor do they only affect the body; the mind likewise suffers." Both physical and the mental aspects were recognized. Moderate exercise coupled with light and wholesome diet were strongly advised in these disorders: "whoever wishes for a thorough cure must expect it from regimen alone." John Wesley considered good air "the first requisite," along with attention to diet and exercise. He was, however, convinced that there was "no remedy in nature for nervous disorders of every kind, comparable to the proper and constant use of the electrical machine." [1]

Francis Asbury sought a change in regimen when he found himself "greatly subject to dejection and gloominess of mind." Attributing his condition to excessive exercise and drinking of tea and coffee, he proposed to "quit the use of these for a season, and see what effect this will produce."[2]

Certain nervous disorders followed a frightening or upsetting experience. Asbury met "a young woman in deep distress of mind, occasioned by the flight of a whip-poor-will close to her, which strangely led her to fear her end was nigh."[3]

Bloodletting was common treatment for nervous trauma, as evidenced by several period accounts. In 1768 a Moravian woman was bled after fainting from fright over a loud clap of thunder. Such depletion therapy for nervous afflictions persisted. Fourteen years later, another North Carolina woman, suffering a severe shock when fire broke out in Bethabara, "was somewhat relieved by bleeding and a foot-bath."[4]

British Lieutenant Anthony Allaire recorded in his 1780 journal the sad tale of "a most accomplished, amiable lady in the greatest distress imaginable." Near Monck's Corner, South Carolina, this woman had been "most shockingly abused by a plundering villain." After a little blood was let from her "she was more composed."[5]

Purgatives were also thought helpful in a variety of those complaints vaguely classified as "nervous." In addition, opium was considered beneficial. Harriott Horry's receipt illustrated both practices:

For a Nervous & Spasmodic Complaint

Take 8 oz. strong Senna tea, put into it 70 drops Laudanum and 120 Drops Ant. Vol. Spit. give a wine glass full every two hours till easy. This Medicine has been used with success to a Servant of mine who was subject to Nervous Fevers attended with violent pains in the head and neck and constant vomiting. If the Vomiting is violent give only 1/2 glass and give it every hour and if the patient is cosfive is best to add an oz. of Salts to the above quantity. If this quantity should not relieve you may continue it as above directed till easy.

Hr

The term *fit* denoted a wide variety of sudden afflictions including fainting, epilepsy, hysterics, palsy, and apoplexy (stroke or other sudden attack). Remedies proposed for curing fits similarly varied. One of the more curious ideas appears in a piedmont North Carolina manuscript:

To Cure any Sort of fits

For to Cure fits Take all the Scales that groeth on the Inside of a Black Stallions Legs Dry it and powder it take for one Dose as much as will ly on the point of a Case knife for a grown person in Malases.

Al

Wesley also employed horse scales or spurs medicinally, although he recommended their use against breast cancer rather than fits. [6]

A lowcountry commonplace book attributed to a "Miss Middleton" two medicines for fits. One was a simple herbal tea for children:

Fits

A handful of Rue boil it in a pint of Water till half is consumed Strain it—then add the very brown Sugar & boil it to a Syrup let a Child take a Teaspoonful now & then.

PD

The second receipt outlined a rather exotic tablet by the name of "fit cakes." Fit cakes were compounded of sugar, gum dragon steeped in rose water, and rectified oil of amber. The mixture was rolled out and cut into cakes to be dried by the fire or in the sun: "If troubled with fits take them twice any time of the Day & by way of prevention take them three days before the full and change of the Moon—They are excellent for all Nervous Complaints" (PD). Contemporary theory suggested that fits of the falling sickness (epilepsy) were more likely to occur at the full moon. Similar instructions for taking medicine three days preceding and following the full and change of the moon were attached to a backcountry receipt to treat a girl with a wasting illness and a "look melencholy" (PD).[7]

Certain gastrointestinal disorders were counted as nervous. Abdominal cramping and windiness were often associated with upsets of the mind and spirits. Hiccups were not treated lightly. Attempts were made to determine their cause. When associated with poisons, tumors, inflammations of internal organs, "gangrenes, acute and malignant fevers," hiccups were feared to be the "forerunner of death." [8]

A 1778 Salem, North Carolina, diary reported that "in Mecklenberg there is an epidemic of illness . . . with violent vomiting and hiccoughing, and that many people have died of it suddenly." Twenty years latter, hiccups remained a grave concern in piedmont Carolina. One toddler's "end was caused by hiccups," and the next year a boy who "lay sick with hiccups" died. Although the Bethabara diarist complained that he "did not feel at all well, and had a bad attack of hiccups," he recovered.[9]

Nervous complaints were generally accompanied by mysterious symptoms that inspired creative remedies. The use of horse scales and the administration of treatment according to the phases of the moon added a touch of the exotic, evoking a bit of magic. Many of those complaints categorized as nervous were best treated through inspiring the patient's confidence in the cure. But, of course, such spiritual or sympathetic elements have always played an important part in medicine.

Chapter 13—
Surgery

Medical practitioners, whether full-time doctors or domestic healers, were likely to possess some degree of proficiency in common surgical procedures—bloodletting, tooth drawing (extraction), lancing, tapping, and amputation. Dr. David Ramsay was guardedly complimentary about lay practitioners: "In cases of surgery they are more at a loss; but even here by the aid of common sense and from the pressure of necessity aiding invention, they sometimes perform wonders." Ramsay cited an upcountry South Carolina case as an example of simple surgical success:

> in the year 1779, [Ramsay] examined the stump of a man living near Orangeburg whose leg . . . had been successfully amputated by one of his neighbors with a common knife, carpenter's handsaw, and tongs. The last instrument was applied red hot to staunch the bleeding. The stump was far from elegant, but with the help of a wooden leg the patient enjoyed all the advantages which are secured by the most dexterous performance of amputation. There was no sergeon within sixty miles of the sufferer. [1]

Home amputation was suggested in directions attached to a South Carolina receipt for a styptic. A bundle of lint was recommended for applying a mixture of brandy, soap, and pearl ash. The compiler of the Alston household receipt book cautioned that "a few applications may be necessary . . . where a limb is cut off."[2]

The diary of Lieutenant Anthony Allaire of Colonel Patrick Ferguson's corps during the campaign of 1780 told of backwoods surgery that occurred on Lawson's Fork of the Pacolet River in South Carolina. A patriot militiaman was wounded in the right arm at the skirmish at Cedar Springs. "The bone was very much shattered. It was taken off by one Frost, a blacksmith, with a shoemaker's knife and carpenter's saw. He stopped the blood with the fungus of the oak, without taking up a blood vessel."[3]

James Smith found himself in a "doleful situation" when attempting to return home to Carolina through the western wilderness in 1766: "I got a cane stab in my foot, which occasioned my leg to swell, and I suffered much pain. . . . All the surgical instruments I had, was a knife, a mockason awl, and a pair of bullit

moulds—with these I determined to draw the snag from my foot, if possible. I stuck the awl in the skin, and with the knife I cut the flesh away from around the cane. I then commanded the mulatto fellow to catch it with the bullit moulds, and pull it out, which he did." The surgery was followed with a poultice of lynn (perhaps linden) root and a bandage of green moss and elm bark. Smith noted in his journal, "the swelling and inflamation in a great measure abated." [4]

In *Domestic Medicine,* William Buchan sought to build home practitioners' confidence in performing basic surgical procedures and emergency treatments. Buchan cited simple folk's successes with operations on livestock and natural inclination to help others in distress: "Indeed, every man is in some measure a surgeon whether he will or not."[5]

Common practice followed Buchan's recommendations. "In an anasarca [accumulation of fluid in tissues] it is usual to scarify the feet and legs. By this means the water is often discharged but the operator must be cautious not to make the incisions too deep. In an ascites [accumulation of fluid in the abdominal cavity] . . . the water ought to be let off by tapping [withdrawing fluid from the cavity with a hollow instrument]. This is a very simple and safe operation."[6]

A mid-1700s lowcountry South Carolina manuscript (PD) described a woman with "a Dropsy who had been tapped many times." In 1773 a similarly afflicted Moravian was aided by an outsider: "Mr. Rudolph, from Belews Creek . . . came today, and made several incisions in both Br. Merk's legs, to draw off the water, as he is suffering from dropsy."[7] William Lenoir described an 1810 case of a man in Halifax County, Virginia, who was tapped five times before a medicine was found effective for his dropsy.

Popular author Dr. Thomas Ewell encouraged women to catheterize themselves or their neighbors in cases of retention of urine: "There is no complaint to which females are subject, more manageable among themselves." He argued that complications might be avoided by eliminating long waits for the arrival of a doctor. When no catheter was available, Ewell suggested substituting a goose quill. Other late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century home medical guides differed in their advice on the use of the urinary catheter. The 1774 edition of *Domestic Medicine* advised that "this instrument can only be managed with safety by persons skilled in surgery," but in the 1794 edition, Buchan added that a bougie (slender instrument or suppository), "may be used by any cautious hand, and will often succeed better than the catheter."[8] The Rachel Stout Allen manuscript included a note that indicated backcountry knowledge of both catheter and bougie: "with a Cathetar for the Stone or rather the mild Bougies . . . Lubricate the passage & greatly facilitate the discharge of urine."

Professional practitioners attempted certain more complicated procedures. An advertisement in the May 1, 1793, *North-Carolina Journal* (Halifax) introduced Gabriel N. Phillips, an Edenton physician and surgeon who had "studied under the most eminent Professors in New York." He offered knowledge of "Amputations, Paracentesis or Tapping, Hair Lip, Hydrocele, Encysted Tumours

commonly called Wens, Polypi of the Nose, different operations on the Eye, Bronchotomy, Lythotomy or cutting for a stone in the Bladder, and Amputation of Cancerous Breasts." The scope of Dr. Phillips surgical services seems typical of the time. Phillips added a disclaimer stating that from this long list he would "engage the success of" only four of these surgeries—operations of the eye, harelip, stone, and encysted tumors.

By the last quarter of the eighteenth-century, backcountry doctors were performing the same surgeries as their coastal peers. Amputation of gangrenous limbs was widely performed both by physicians and by lay practitioners.

Even among those elite who had access to trained physicians and could well afford their fees, there existed an intense dread and distrust of surgical procedures. One vivid account comes from the eastern shore of Maryland in 1788. A young mother with a sore breast was fortunate that it "gather'd and broke in three days." A friend describing this illness in a letter declared, "I never saw a Creature so terrified as she was. The idea of Lancets, Probes, and crooked scissors haunted her continually but happily none of them were necessary, and her Breast is now almost entirely well." [9]

An equally distressing account from Abington, Virginia, portrayed surgery as a family affair. Although a physician was to perform the operation, relatives were called upon to assist: "The Doctor has prenounsed the lump in our poor little sister Betseys breast dangerous and says it will have immediately to be cut out. . . . Edward will come home and we intend summonsing some of our relations that has most currage to assist the Doctor; he says there is not the least doubt but he can have her perfectly sound in one month."[10]

In 1790 a Moravian woman "had a sore breast, which had become dangerous, and the operation was undertaken today, and was accomplished successfully." Three years later Dr. Samuel Vierling performed a "major operation" on Sister Graff, for removal of a cancerous sore. Her memoir related that she stood the intense pain with great fortitude. The operation was deemed entirely successful, and she lived for many more years. Vierling remained active as surgeon for the Moravians and their neighbors for many years. In 1808 he removed a twoand-a-half-pound growth from the side of a patient who had been brought fifty miles from his home in Randolph County, North Carolina: "The sick man was very thankful that the operation went so well. The doctor in his neighborhood had given him no hope." Settlers from neighboring counties, even from Virginia and South Carolina, sought cures in Salem. In 1804, "Dr. Caldwell, a Presbyterian minister from Guilford County . . . brought to our doctor Vierling his daughter, twenty-four years old . . . for many years she had suffered from weakness of the mind. . . . Br. Vierling trepanned the skull; the operation went well, . . . the patient showed marked improvement in the condition of her mind." Two years later, Dr. Vierling performed another trepanning (cutting a circular piece of bone from the skull) on a German man from Guilford County, "who for a number of years has suffered extraordinary pain and has had a constant hammering and

humming in his ears. This was probably the result of a blow with an axe and great fright. . . . He felt some relief from the operation." [11]

Eye surgery was a special interest of another famous North Carolina physician, Calvin Jones. In addition to experimental and aggressive surgical techniques, he relied on drastic depletion therapies (especially bloodletting and purging) as preparation and follow-up to surgery. In couching, the most common method of cataract surgery in Jones's day, the lens capsule was pushed into the inner chamber of the eye with a blunt needle. Cataract removal by lens extraction was also known but was not yet widely performed. Moravian diarists recorded the case of a completely blind twenty-four-year-old wagoner who "had the cataract in one of his eyes pierced" by Dr. Vierling. The other eye "had been so ruined by the use of corrosives that no operation was possible."[12]

None of these surgeries invaded the abdominal cavity. However, that difficult medical hurdle was cleared in the Virginia backcountry in 1794 by Dr. Jesse Bennett, who performed a successful cesarean section on his own wife. When it seemed that both mother and child might perish, the woman insisted that the baby be saved; however, both mother and daughter survived.[13]

An operation, without anesthetic, on a forty-seven-year-old farm woman to remove a huge ovarian cyst was another a milestone. Performed in 1807 by Dr. Ephraim McDowell of Danville, Kentucky, this surgical procedure succeeded. Five days following the operation, the doctor reportedly found the woman making her own bed, and she survived for another thirty-one years. This case made medical history not only for successful removal of the growth but also for demonstrating that surgery in the abdominal cavity was possible.[14]

Most surgeries were performed as heroic recourse in desperate situations. Although success rates were not high when compared to modern standards, the remote possibility of a surgical cure offered a glimmer of hope.

Chapter 14—
Sympathetic Medicine:
Signs, Charms, Incantations, and Spells

A close tie has always existed between healing and the supernatural. Illness is often mysterious, and many complaints are at least partly psychosomatic. Important to the healing process are the patient's state of mind and faith in the proposed cure. Throughout medical history, successful practitioners have strived to inspire the confidence of their patients, thus opening a door for recovery.

Disease and healing seldom follow a purely predictable path. Humans have naturally sought sources for unusual, unexplained, and miraculous cures and have attempted to replicate them. The cure need not be rational, just as the disease did not seem rational. Rituals that inspired confidence or dispelled anxiety were employed with benefit.

The Doctrine of Signatures is but one example of a supernatural element attached to early remedies. Among the domestic receipts assembled for this book runs a thread of this ancient tradition of signatures or signs. Saffron added the appropriate yellow color to Harriott Horry's "Excellent Receipt for the Jaundice." Use of snakelike roots or the snake itself to counteract effects of a snake's bite seemed reasonable by the Doctrine of Signatures. Employing a gizzard in treatment of kidney stone or gravel may have stemmed from the observation of grit collected in the fowl's gizzard.

For the Gravel

Take the inside film which will strip off from the Gizards of Pigeons clean the inside by scraping & wiping but not washing before you peel off the film as you get them hang them upon a string to dry—powder them fine & in a raging fit of Pain from the Gravel take as much at once as will lie loosely piled upon a Sixpence mix up in a few drops of Honey—It may in urgent necessity be repeated in four Hours—for twice or thrice—But it usually gives ease at first & brings away the obstructing Matter—It is a very hot thing & must not be triffled with or often repeated during fit.

PD

Ground up stone (flint) as a cure for kidney stones seems another application of the Doctrine of Signatures. William Salmon's *New London Dispensatory* listed flint not only to "open Obstructions and dissolve the Stone" but also for lungs and to cleanse teeth. [1] William Lenoir reported a success with this remedy in 1805 when a gift "had the Gravil very bad" and was cured as follows:

> For the Gravil by Wm. Atkins, (from a Dr. in Virga)
>
> Take oil Flints (gun flints) and beat them to Powder put as much of sd powder as would ly on the pint of a Case knife into a pint of Apple vinagar and boil it away to half a pint, and while it is boiling take 3 Table-spoon-fulls And if it has no effect in a few hours boil some more in like manner and take the same quantity in like manner-NB, too great a quantity might be dangerous to a person holding water. . . . W Adkins says the same Doctor told that for a person that Could not hold their water take a bee & a half Dry them beat them to powder, & drink in a spoonful of water was the best thing they could do [Note in margin:] honey bee.
>
> Ln

Seeking medical help from a spiritual leader took advantage of a logical source for supernatural assistance. Journals of traveling ministers, such as Methodist Francis Asbury and Anglican Charles Woodmason, recorded repeated solicitations for medical help. John Wesley's writings had great impact throughout the period studied here. Passages from his *Primitive Physick* were transcribed verbatim into the Rachel Stout Allen and John Thompson commonplace books. Many of Wesley's medicines were simplified versions of traditional herbal or chemical recipes, but he also prescribed several sympathetic remedies. For example, both William Buchan and Wesley recommended that patients with advanced consumption might benefit from suckling human milk from "a healthy woman daily." A "disease of the breast," as chest complaints were termed, was to be treated with the product of a breast. Nicholas Culpeper had published the same advice a century earlier in his midwifery guide. Alternately Wesley advised, "every morning, cut a little turf of fresh earth, and laying down, breathe in the hole for a quarter of an hour," declaring he had known this ritual to cure a deep consumption.[2]

Not every spiritual healer was a member of the clergy. In 1788 there was an outcry against a "conjurer" who treated illnesses in the Moravian settlement of Bethabara, North Carolina.[3] The curious sympathetic remedies that follow hint at numerous other purveyors of charms, spells, and incantations. At times, even such a flimsy element of reason as following a signature or the advice of a religious leader was sidestepped for a purely magical cure.

The tradition that came to be known as Pennsylvania German powwow

medicine traveled down the Great Wagon Road during the mid-eighteenth century when the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and the Carolina and Georgia piedmont regions were receiving the initial flood of European settlers. Notwithstanding the name, powwow remedies had no American Indian origin but stemmed from German practices. Gaelic knowledge of curative charms and incantations was equally rich. Sympathetic cures were introduced by Scots-Irish and other European settlers as well as Germans. With their own firm traditions in magical healing, many Euro-Americans readily accepted African conjuring. [4]

Joseph Doddridge recorded such practices on the Pennsylvania and Virginia frontier between 1763 and 1783: "Charms and incantations were in use for the cure of many diseases. I learned, when young, the incantation in German for the cure of burns, stopping blood, for the toothache, and the charm against bullets in battle; but for the want of faith in their efficacy I never used any of them."[5] However, unlike Doddridge, many frontier folk fondly held to these beliefs.

The widespread practice of talking out burns or stopping bleeding with a verse has continued into the twentieth century, illustrating the lasting appeal of these traditions. A biblical verse, Ezekiel 16:6, has long been employed for talking out bleeding and has persisted in use among upcountry South Carolinians, AfroAmericans, and quite likely other groups. There is as yet no evidence that this particular verse was used as a charm in pre-1820 sources, however.[6]

Incantations were guarded and handed down to carefully selected younger practitioners. Shrouded in secrecy, these practices were generally transmitted orally, and many of them have been lost as a result.

James Potter Collins's testimonial from the South Carolina and Georgia backcountry settlements described his magical recovery from a lengthy bout of the fever, or shaking ague, with the following ceremony:

> some one assured me that if I would prepare a string long enough to tie as many knots as I had had shakes, and when I felt the shakes coming on, take my string and go to some fruit bearing tree, turn my back and put my string around the tree, and counting, tie a knot for every shake including the one coming on, and depart without looking back, it would cure me. I own I had no faith in the project . . . yet I thought there could be no harm in it; I tried it, and my shake coming on, it was as much as I could do to hold out, having sixty-three knots to tie. I had fatigued myself, and my shake was severer than common; but be that as it may the thing did not return.[7]

Predictably, Buchan railed against such remedies: "by some strange infatuation, more charms and whimsical remedies are daily used for removing [intermitting fever] than any other disease. There is hardly an old woman who is not in possession of a nostrum for stopping an ague; and it is amazing with what readiness their pretensions are believed."[8]

Not limited to the frontier, sympathetic medicine was also embraced by

more sophisticated townspeople. In 1794 Charlestonian Eliza Drayton shared her mother's charm for fever and ague in a letter to a cousin, Mrs. Carnes, with the instruction, "it is to be worn next to his skin":

> When Jesus saw the Place where his Body was to be crucified-his Body did shake—& the Jews asked Him, hast thou an Ague?—Jesus answered & said—whosoever shall be troubled with Fever or Ague—let Him keep this in memory or writing—&: He shall never be troubled with Fever or Ague more—so help me God—so be it. Amen. [9]

Transferring pain or disease to an animal or to an object constituted another ancient and widespread practice. A lowcountry technique for combating fever employed the notion of transference of the ailment to a pigeon:

> For a Violent Fever
>
> Take a young Pigeon alive & put the rump of it to the vent of the person and hold it close till the pigeon begins to sicken then take another and repeat it for five or six the above receipt cured three children of Mr Fishers a Clergymen at Peterborough after given over by two physicians—
>
> PD

A similar cure involving pigeons was published in Salmon's *New London Dispensatory:* "A live Pigeon laid with the Anus naked to a Plague Sore, and repeated so often as the Pigeon dies, frees the sick from the Venom, and all manner of Danger."[10]

Transference also appears to have been the idea behind the cure of a Moravian woman in 1780. Troubled with a headache while traveling from Pennsylvania to Salem, "At noon as she lay on a bed in the shade a hog jumped over her because the dog was after it, and this cured her."[11]

Transference of an ailment to an object rather than to an animal was also considered possible. Lenoir reported an interesting case:

> May 1806 old Mr Thos Young he was Cured of the Rheumatism in his arm after being unable to raise it to his head for a month, by rubing it down often with the Points of Steel Scissars Scratching hard enough to hurt—
>
> Ln

This stroking with metal points is reminiscent of the operation of Elisha Perkins's tractors. From the information at hand, it is not possible to determine whether this cure was thought to have been brought about by transference. It might have been considered effective simply because of the distracting counterirritant action of the scissors.

Applying a collard or cabbage leaf with ginger as a poultice to the top of the

head in case of a badly swollen sore throat (Al) and applying garlic to the soles of the feet for sore throat (Ln) or for croup (Hr) were perhaps similarly employed as distracting elements. Each of those receipts combined herbal and sympathetic medicine, as do the following interesting rituals:

> If a purge was used, it was about half a pint of a strong decoction of white walnut bark. This, when intended for a purge, was peeled downwards; if for a vomit, it was peeled upwards. [12]
>
> Mrs. Eversole's Cure for pains, Rheumatism, & weakness in knees &c.
>
> Take the Bark of Cucumber tree near the ground on the West side as much as you can hold in your hand & hide with your fingers Cleaverly to prevent its being seen, put it in a quart of water & boil it away to a pint, drink one half in the morning & the other in the Evening;—put as much fine Coperas in each half pint as will lie on the point of a small penknife.
>
> Ln

Rituals seem frequently to have been paired with medicines, as above. However, some rituals involved purely physical means, as in this technique for stopping nosebleed:

> To stop Bleeding at the Nose
>
> Whichever Nostril bleeds or if both take the Garter or Garters & tie it tight round the ancle & it will stop it—
>
> PD

Similarly, Buchan and Johnson advised tightening garters or cords on thighs and arms to stop nosebleeds.

The more serious the complaint, the more drastic the attempted cure. This pervading notion endorsed the use of animal parts along with other dramatic medicines and measures. The wide variety of filth drugs and animal simples remaining in use represented holdovers from medieval medicine. Specific steps were often associated with collecting animal simples. One late-eighteenth-century lowcountry manuscript put forth these instructions for collecting urine to treat an unnamed but serious affliction:

> A Clyster which saved a Mans Life after being given over
>
> Take a pint of fresh Urine for a Man take Womans urine for a Woman take Mans Urine a strangers better than a relations a pint fresh uring a spoonful of Salt two spoonfuls of treacle a spoonful or two of oil boil them well together apply them luke warm—
>
> PD

Particular concern with whether the urine was collected from man or woman in

this receipt added ritual to strengthen the cure. Ritual was carried to an extreme in the complicated steps prescribed for procuring the penis of a deer to treat a child's rupture or hernia:

> An indian cure for the ripture in children
>
> it was found out by a man who wos a prisnor for five yeare with a nation who Lived in new penselvaney and on a river named white river the first thing that must be got is an old bucks Pisel he must be cilled in the old of the moon in buck hunting time then take the pisel and dry it then cut of one inch and a half of the end of the pisel and boil it in half a pint of new milk untill it begins to crud the person being well bound up must drink the milk on a fasting Stumock this be don three mornings hand runing and this cure must be performed in the old of the moon and between cock crow and day.
>
> Gn

Well represented in manuscript sources were remedies requiring specific animal simples such as scales from a black stallion's legs (Al), wood lice (Hr), earthworms (PD), stallion's dung (Al), fresh fowl dung (Hr), or the blood of a black cat:

> The erysipelas, or St. Anthony's fire, was circumscribed by the blood of a black cat. Hence there was scarcely a black cat to be seen whose ears and tail had not been frequently cropped, for a contribution of blood. [13]

Blood from a cat was hardly new as a cure. Six hundred years earlier, Albertus Magnus, teacher of Saint Thomas Aquinas, reported a remedy from a gentlewoman who tended those suffering from fevers: "This matron of a noble family cut the ear of a cat, let three drops of blood fall in some brandy, added a little pepper thereto, and gave it to the patient to drink."[14]

Deer, horse, hen, and cow dung appear among ingredients in the manuscript sources used for this study. Snails and worms figured in these domestic receipts as well.

Not only cures but also diagnoses were sought through sympathetic means. Enlisting the aid of earthworms to determine whether a patient was suffering from intestinal worms may have seemed reasonable in a desperate situation:

> An approved receipt for Worms
>
> An handful of Rue the same quantity of Featherfew bruised fine nine large Live Earth Worms all sewed up in a fine bag & hung round the person against the Navel this is to be done either at the full or new Moon for twenty four Hours—If the Person has Worms the Earth Worms will be totally Evaporated In that Case a Dose of Senna or Rhubarb should be given when the Bag is taken off & the Worms will

"A Cuar for an Old Soar" and "A Reciet for the Bite of a Mad Dog." Joshua Gordon Witchcraft Memorandum, 1784, York County, South Carolina. The incantation to cure a dog bite was repeated later in the manuscript in a slightly different form: "Lersam kerim & affara caffara strack / Pat mat simiat." Courtesy South Caroliniana Collection, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

infallibly come away—For thread Worms take oil & brown Sugar two or three teaspoonfuls.

PD

Verbal or written incantations played a role in protecting a body against harm as well as in curing. A Gaelic charm survives from Moore County, North Carolina. Some disagreement exists among three Scots Gaelic readers who attempted to translate the charm, although all agreed that it offered protection against sickness, murder, and war. The scrap of paper may represent typical eighteenth-century charms bought and carried by soldiers. Beginning "In the name of the Father and Son and holey g[host]," its form seems remarkably similar to the charms with German roots in John George Hohman's Pennsylvania powwow collection. [15]

Another method of activating a charm was by swallowing it. Doddridge recollects the use of a large pill "composed of Burgundy pitch and rue . . . with a narrow strip of paper rolled up in the middle of it" for someone bitten by a mad dog. "The paper contained about a dozen ill-shapen letters, but not so arranged as to spell any word in any language with which I am acquainted." It is clear that Doddridge did not place faith in such remedies, remembered from his youth in

the backwoods of Virginia and Pennsylvania: "The physician who gave those pills reported that he got the recipe for making them from a priest of Abyssinia. Such is the superstition which still [at the end of the colonial period] remains attached to the practice of the healing art, and from which, in all likelihood, it will never be separated." [16] Ancient Abyssinian or Ethiopian charms as well as Roman charms survived. These magical formulas seem to have spread throughout western Europe and were brought to America in varying forms.

A charm against mad dogs, perhaps similar to the one described by Doddridge, survives from about the same time but from several hundred miles further south, York County, South Carolina. The manuscript's author, Joshua Gordon, did not describe how these words were to be administered.

> Lersam kerim & affara caffara strack
>
> Pat mat simiat
> for the bite of a mad dog.
>
> Gn

A curiously similar remedy was passed down in an aristocratic Dutch family in New York. The following charm was penned in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

> A Cure for the Bite of a Mad Dog
>
> Affrat, frasret, Frasset, give the person or anime one of these words writen on paper in their Order as they stand on three mornings successively.[17]

The number three and its multiples, especially nine, had long been considered mystical. The directions accompanying this cure provide but one example of the continuing adherence to this ancient belief.

Exotic cures abounded for diseases that were difficult to diagnose as well as for those that tended to abate even without treatment. Hydrophobia often appeared to be cured when the person had actually not been infected, since most bites do not come from rabid animals. Oral history hints that special porous stones, valued for sucking poison from dog bites, snakebites, or sores, were well known in the Carolinas and Virginia by the early 1800s if not before. In the nineteenth century these stones were called *madstones* from their common use against mad dog bites. Although the name *madstone* may be relatively new, stories of stones used against various ills, especially poisons, go back into antiquity. Such stones have been known by varying names—bezoar, snake stone, Chinese snake stone, and India stone. Many but not all formed in the digestive tracts or gall bladders of animals, often ruminants. These porous stones were applied to a wound and said to stick and suck if poison were present. After use, the stones were generally cleansed in warm water or milk. The liquid was expected to bubble

and to change color, usually turning green, if poison had indeed been absorbed from the bite or sore. [18]

Regard for the bezoar stone in medicine may have developed independently on both sides of the Atlantic. John Lawson, during his travels in the Carolina interior at the beginning of the eighteenth century, inquired of Indians from the Yadkin River Valley if "they never got any of the Bezoar Stone, and giving them a description of how it was found, the Indians told [him], they had great plenty of it." Lawson went on to explain that "white men us'd it in Physick" and offered to buy some. Lawson did not elaborate on just how he intended to use the stone but did explain native usage: "that Powder, blown into the Eyes, strengthen'd the Sight and Brain exceedingly." Lawson offered additional insight into eighteenthcentury knowledge of these stones when he noted, "Some Deer on these Mountains afford the occidental Bezoar, not coming from a Goat, as some report. What sort of Beast affords the oriental Bezoar, I know not."[19]

The many nineteenth-century accounts of madstones in North Carolina and Virginia indicate a continuing usage of magical minerals. Long family traditions surrounding those madstones point to probable localized popularity during the eighteenth century as well. Although many such stones were considered specific for poisonous bites, the Moravian diaries of 1775 report that someone was "sent to Bethania [North Carolina] for the stone which is said to be good for stopping bleeding, and it helped" a nasal hemorrhage. Sir Walter Scott's *The Talisman* concludes with this statement about the magical stone for which that novel was named: "its virtues are still applied for stopping blood and in cases of canine madness." The stone charm of that novel was said to have been brought to Scotland by an adventurer returning from the Crusades. In Scotland, red stone amulets were considered especially effective.[20]

An intriguing entry in William Alexander's 1776–78 diary of travel and trade between piedmont North Carolina and Pennsylvania raises questions about other magical charms obtained from deer: "Be it remembered that a doe hard to kill has a bug in her heart case which if kept will prove lucky—the same will be at the root of a bucks horn thats hard to kill." Perhaps these lucky tokens were related to the "bone of a stag's heart" listed among diaphoretics in John Quincy's 1736 *Pharmacopoeia* with the comment that this medicine was "of the same Rank" as unicorn's horn "and now justly in neglect."[21]

Because the origins of disease were difficult to determine, desperate practitioners sometimes looked to supernatural causes as well as supernatural cures. Witchcraft was suspected as a cause in a variety of misfortunes, including illness and injury. Just as evildoers were thought to cast spells to bring misfortune, rituals for counteracting evil spells existed. Such beliefs from Europe and from Africa mingled in America.

The lingering malaise African poison was attributed to real or imagined poisoning or to conjuring by a slave. After enduring years of ill health and recurring fevers, Collins finally consulted a doctor, who, on failing to effect a cure, diag-

nosed him as surely suffering from African poison. Wesley stated, "Nothing cures the African poison but a decoction of the roots of the sensitive plant." Collins was also urged to try an "African cure." One neighbor told of being "perfectly cured . . . without medicine and nothing more than what people called conjuration." Although hampered in two attempts by his own disbelief, desperation led Collins to a third African conjurer who gained Collins's confidence. The details of the procedure were not recorded, but he reported, "however strange it may appear to others, I was entirely cured." [22]

In upcountry South Carolina, Gordon described a ceremony to remove the fear of malicious witchcraft in his 1784 leather-bound medical memorandum book. It is odd that he committed these instructions to paper since he recommended that "you & yurs Keep the following a profound Secret":

> If you are suspecious of the person that does you Hurt write their name and Sirname on a pice of paper then bore a hole in your horse trough make a pin that will Just fit the hole then put in the pice of paper into the hole and drive in the pin a little way next day drive it a little more and So on Every day till it be driven Home. all this must be dun Without any persons knowledge but yourself. In all The afore menshened Cases you must not lend any manner of thing off for the space of 9 Days your plantation, the person or persons guilty will assuredly come wanting to Borrow Somethin But by no means Lend otherwise you lay open again to thir malies which will Be more desprate than Before.
>
> Gn

A cure for witchcraft and poison was included among medical receipts in a 1829 commonplace book. Although this collection of cures was dated slightly later than most folkways considered for this study, this Wake County, North Carolina, source followed the traditions of the preceding half century in receipts for remedies and in this lone sympathetic cure:

> A cure for wichcraft and poison
>
> Draw the likeness of the person whom a suspition on a pine tree drive a ten penny nail through the boddy if you wish to kill them if not to kill them drive the nail through some other, or take a black quart bottle full of your water berry the bottle in youre harth bild a log fire upon the bottle and in the corse of two hours the person whom guilty will come to borry something if you wish to kill them you must not lend them any thing &c.[23]

This series of actions aimed at counteracting the malignant spells of a witch were remarkably similar to those Doddridge described fifty years earlier on the Virginia and Pennsylvania frontier. In Doddridge's account, a silver bullet rather

than a nail was required to injure the image of the witch, and the water from a bewitched child was hung up in the chimney instead of being buried in the ashes. [24]

These three similar antidotes for witchcraft were drawn from three states and spanned half a century. This undercurrent of occult medicine originated with the advent of humankind and continues among some groups into the present.

The belief in witches and spells was not universal, of course. The Moravians recorded, "The [1786] Conference was distressed to note that the superstition regarding hex and other preposterous things has not entirely ceased among us." The fact that the church and community leaders were so concerned verifies the local belief in supernatural elements outside the church. Two years later, in reaction to news of the conjurer practicing in Bethabara, Moravian church leaders warned that "any one who believed in such supernatural powers and made use of them could not be permitted to attend the Lord's Supper."[25]

An element of mystery is present in most illness and in most medicine. Supernatural cause and cure comprise an important chapter in the story of the ongoing human battle with illness. To the earliest humans, magic, religion, and medicine were inseparable. Eighteenth-century folk seemed generally less concerned about separating those elements than are people today. Faith has always been and remains an important ingredient in medical treatment, providing strong psychological support. With each failed attempt at treatment, more exotic and less rational remedies are sought, even on the brink of the twenty-first century. As Collins noted, "It is certainly a question, too hard to be solved, by short sighted man, to separate the mysterious union that exists between the mind and body, or to render the proper antidote possessing the two fold qualities of relieving both mind and body."[26]

PART 3—
A DOMESTIC MATERIA MEDICA

Introduction

This materia medica is a compilation of ingredients drawn from pre-1820 domestic remedies in the American South. Those home practices were compared with advice from popular medical guides of the period. Although other uses were suggested for many of these medicinals, this section focuses on tracing traditions behind remedies found among the manuscript sources linked in this study. Medical ingredients listed here were not necessarily the most common or the most highly recommended. This materia medica represents an accurate, though partial, story of the home practice of physic in the backcountry settlements and in related trendsetting coastal communities.

In keeping with the spirit of the original sources, I have generally adhered to antiquated terminology and spellings, but I have attempted to clarify the identity of each entry with modern botanical or chemical nomenclature. Again, I feel compelled to point out historical medicinal usage does not prove safety, and continued use does not prove effectiveness. This is a representative story of domestic medical practices—purely a history lesson.

Key to Sources

Unpublished Manuscript Commonplace Books and Medical Notes

Al	Rachel Stout Allen Medical Memorandum, piedmont North Carolina, n.d. (probably late 1700s)
Bl	Jacob Blount Pocket Memorandum, eastern North Carolina, 1764–67
Cm	Ann Cameron Household Book, piedmont North Carolina, 1816–
Hr	Harriott Pinckney Horry Household Book, South Carolina lowcountry, 1770–
Ln	William Lenoir Medical Memorandum, western North Carolina, 1801–39
Mc	Archibald Maclaine Commonplace Book, eastern North Carolina, 1775–1800
Ml	Frederic William Marshall Commonplace Book, Pennsylvania and pied mont North Carolina, circa 1764–75
PD	Anonymous Herbal and Household Book, South Carolina lowcountry, 1738, 1778–85
Pk	Eliza Lucas Pinckney Household Book, South Carolina lowcountry, 1756–
SC	Anonymous Commonplace Book, South Carolina lowcountry, 1806–16
Sm	Dorothea Christina Schmidt Cookery and Medical Receipt Book, Germany and eastern Georgia, circa 1772
Tm	John Thompson Commonplace Book, central Tennessee, 1803–11
Vr	Dr. Samuel Vierling inventories, piedmont North Carolina, 1817–18

Published Diaries, Surveys, and Natural History Notes

As Francis Asbury, *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury* (southeast ern North America, 1771–93)

Bd William Byrd, *Histories of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina* (Virginia and North Carolina, 1728)

Dd Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania from 1763 to 1783* (Virginia and Pennsylvania backcountry, 1763–83)

Km Peter Kalm, *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America* (Pennsylvania and New York, 1748–50)

MR Adelaide L. Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (North Carolina backcountry, 1752–1808)

Rs Ralph Emmett Fall, ed., *The Diary of Robert Rose* (tidewater Virginia, 1746–51)

Ru Christian Gottlieb Reuter, botanical inventory, included in vol. 2 of Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (North Carolina backcountry, 1764)

Selected Herbals and Popular Medical Guides

These basic references served for tracing traditions followed by southern domestic practitioners. Publication dates given here are not those of the earliest editions but are those of the editions used in documenting this materia medica. These volumes are among those that might have been found in the hands of the self-trained health-care providers whose methods are examined in this book.

(B) William Buchan, *Domestic Medicine* (1774)

(B-mm) William Buchan, material medica included in *Every Man His Own Doc tor* (extracted from James Thacher's *American New Dispensatory* and Benjamin Smith Barton's *Collections*) (1816)

(Br) Benjamin Smith Barton, *Collections for an Essay towards a Materia Medica of the United States* (1810)

(Cn) Benjamin Smith Barton, *Professor Cullen's Treatise of the Materia Medica* (1812)

(Cp) Nicholas Culpeper, *The English Physician Enlarged* (1770)

(ED) *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* (1791)

(Q) John Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia Officinalis and Extemporanea; or, A Com plete English Dispensatory* (1736)

(W) John Wesley, *Primitive Physick* (1791)

Simples and Medicinal Preparations Fit for Horne Practice

Adder's-Tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum,* Fernald or other sp.)
(The common name *adder's-tongue* has also been applied to several members of the lily family—trout lily, wake-robin, and lily of the valley.) The *Ophioglossum* is an atypical fern with its spike of spores rising from the leaf, "like the tongue of an adder serpent (only this is as useful as they are formidable)" (Cp). The green leaves of the adder's-tongue "sufficiently boiled in . . . oil, is made an excellent green balsam, not only for green and fresh wounds, but also for old inveterate ulcers" (B). Al. *See also* **Walnut Fern.**

Agaric (*Polyporus officinalis* or other fungus that grows on old trees)
"Some recommend the agaric of the oak as preferable to any of the other styptics. . . . A piece of it must be laid upon the wound, and covered with a good deal of lint, above which a bandage may be applied" until the bleeding is stopped (B). Vr.

Agrimony (*Agrimonia parviflora* Ait. [native cocklebur] or *A. eupatoria* L. [European])
Culpeper documented the esteem of this herb for all purposes noted in the manuscript sources. Among a multitude of proposed uses, agrimony "cleanseth the Breast, and rids away the Cough" while aiding kidney complaints and other "inward distempers." "To prevent [the gravel's] return, breakfast for three months on agrimony tea." (W). Agrimony in green ointment fit well-established tradition: "The Country People use the Herb . . . in Contusions and fresh Wounds" (Q). Agrimony was listed among wild plants growing in piedmont North Carolina in 1764 with the notation that "a strong odor; is good." (Ru). Al, Ln, PD.

Alisma Plantago, Water Plantain (*Alisma subcordatum* Raf.)
"a Certain Cure for the Hydrophobia" (Ln).

Allspice, Jamaica Pepper (*Pimenta officinalis* Lindley)
Tropical American tree. Used in aromatic waters and for Saint Anthony's fire. Tm, Vr. *See also* **Pepper.**

Almond (*Prunus dulcis* D. A. Webb)
Both nuts and oil advertised in Charleston newspapers. Used in Turlington's balsam and as a "slight physick" (PD). Hr, PD, Vr.

Aloes, sucotrine aloes (*1Aloe barbadensis* Mill. or other sp.)
Imported from West Indies to Charleston and available in backcountry stores. For "Lingering sickness" (Ln) and for worms as well as an ingredient in Turlington's balsam, hiera-picra, and antibilious pills. Ln, Hr, Pk, As, Vr.

Alum (varying double sulfates, as aluminum and potassium or aluminum and ammonium)
Widely available in stores, coastal and frontier, throughout time period. Powerful astringent used to remedy profuse menses and the whites and as suppository to stimulate a purge, as eye water, as gargle, poultice, or lotion for various sores including sore throat or sore nipples. Tm, Ln, Hr, Al, Mc, As, Vr.

Amber, Oil of
Advertised in Charleston newspapers. External use for whooping cough and also in fit cakes. PD.

American Ipecac. *See* **Ipecacuanha.**

Ammonia, Ammonium Compounds
Derived from horn or from urine. Hartshorn shavings "much more in esteem amongst Family doctresses than in the shops" (Q). Spirit of Mindererus (ammonium acetate) (prepared from hartshorn and vinegar); sal ammoniac (ammonium chloride); volatile sal ammoniac (ammonium carbonate); spirits of sal ammoniac (ammonia and ammonium carbonate); volatile aromatic spirits; eau de luce; spiritus salis volatilis oleosus; aromatic spirit of ammonia; sal volatile oleosum (sal ammoniac and salt of tartar with fragrant herbs and spices, "varied according to the different Humours of the Maker" [Q]). Ammonia and ammonium compounds entered into a wide assortment of cures for respiratory disorders, snakebite, tetter, warts. SC, PD, Hr, Cm, Tm, Vr.

Angelica (*Angelica triquinata* Michaux or the cultivated *A. archangelica L.*)
"grows very plentifully here [northern piedmont, North Carolina] on the hills" and is "reputed to be an antidote for poison" (Ru). Used also in Turlington's balsam and for consumption. Hr, Al.

Anise (*Pimpinella anisum* L., *Myrrhis odorata* Mill., or *Foeniculum vulgare* [Mill.] Thell.)
Anise seeds and oil used against cough, colic, windiness, and flux. Hr, Ln, Pk, PD, Sm, Vr. *See also* **Fennel.**

Antimony
Tartar emetic (antimony potassium tartrate); antimonial wine (tartar emetic in wine); glass of antimony (vitrified antimony oxide); golden sulfur of antimony (antimony pentasulfide). Antimony preparations were used for coughs and in an unidentified "antimony cure" for "old leg malady" (MR). Tartar emetic was included in Horry's "Serviceable Family Medicine" and "Antibilious Pills" and when an emetic seemed needed in fevers or fluxes. Hr, Sm, PD, As, Vr.

Aqua Fortis. *See* **Spirits of Niter.**

Armenian Bole, Bole Armoniac (type of earth chiefly from Armenia)
"Wax for Corks: Rosin & Bees Wax of each equal quantities Bole Armoniac half as much as one of the ingredients" (PD). PD, Vr.

Arsenic, White (arsenic trioxide)
Wilkins warned, "I would caution every prudent person to keep his skin to himself, and not let ignorant quacks fill up their lack of knowledge on him with the virulence of an arsenical plaster, or a more dangerous bolus." Arsenic was listed among new medicines in Ramsay's *History of South Carolina, 1670–1808,* [1] and Barton proclaimed, "we have discovered the inestimable substitute for the bark. . . . Arsenic" (Br). The Thompson manuscript called for white arsenic in a pill for cancer and a fever remedy: "A saturated solution of arsenic in warter is infallible for fever and ague. . . . Give to childring according to the age of them" (Tm). Vr.

Arum. *See* **Calves Foot**.

Asafoetida (*Ferula assa-foetida* L. or *F. narthex Boiss*)
From the Middle East, this "very stinking gum" was employed especially for "hysteric and nervous complaints, flatulent colics" (Q). Vr.

Asarabacca. *See* **Wild Ginger.**

Ash (*Fraxinus americana* L. or other sp.)
"It is protection against snakes" (Ru), with the inner bark employed for snakebite. "Ashen-keys . . . accounted good in the Jaundice, Pleurisy, and the Stone" (Q). Mc, Bl, Ru.

Ashes
One school of thought suggested the ashes of medicinal plants had unique efficacy, although the various ashes actually differ little in chemical composition. "For whatsoever is reduced into such a Substance [a salt] by Calcination has no Qualities but what the Fire gives it; and therefore Salt of Tartar is as good as the

Salt of any Plant" (Q). A diversity of ashes were employed in domestic remedies studied. Al, PD, Pk, SC, Hr, Ln, Tm, Mc. *See also* Lye; Tartar, Salt of.

Balm, Baum. *See* **Melissa.**

Balsam of Capivi (Copaiba) (*Copaifera officinalis* [Jacq.] L. or other species) From South America and West Indies, this gum was especially used for urinarytract problems and ringworm. Hr, Vr.

Balsam Fir. *See* **Spruce.**

Balsam of Peru (*Myroxylon balsamum* var. *pereirae* [Royle] Baill)
From West Indies and South America, Peruvian balsam was described as "of an admirable Fragrancy. It heals, dries, and discusses [dispels]; and is a great Strengthner and Warmer of the Nerves" (Q), however by the end of the century it was thought that in some official compositions "it has rather a bad than a good effect" (ED). Hr, Vr.

Balsam of Tolu (*Myroxylon balsamum* var. *balsamum* [L.] Harms)
A South American tree closely related to that yielding Peruvian balsam. Vr.

Bark. *See* **Cinchona.**

Bay (European bay laurel [*Laurus nobilis* L.]), American Red Bay (*Persea borbonia* [L.] Sprengel, or perhaps a species of magnolia or myrica [myrtle]) In ointment and leaves applied for pain in the face. PD. *See also* **Cucumber Tree; Poplar.**

Bearberry. *See* **Uva Ursi.**

Bedstraw, Ladies' (*Galium* sp.)
Although early herbal tradition counted ladies' bedstraw "good to fret and break the stone" (Cp), later writers judged it to have "never been much in use" (ED). It was also tried for hoarseness. PD.

Bee, Honeybee
Powdered dried bee was traditionally administered as a diuretic. Eliza Smith's *Compleat Housewife* included bees in a preparation to "give Ease in Fits of the Stone," as did Salmon's *New London Dispensatory*. [2] Lenoir's dose of powdered bee "for a person that could not hold their water" seems contrary to tradition.

Beechdrops, Cancer Root (*Epifagus virginiana* [L.] Barton)
Pills for cancer included "the sprouts that comes up from the beech mast roots" (Tm).

Benzoin, Benjamin (*Styrax benzoin* Dryander)
Resin from a tree native to Sumatra and Siam. Used in the popular preparations Turlington's balsam, pomade divine, and cough drops. Hr, Vr. *See also* **Storax.**

Betony (*Stachys officinalis* [L.] Trevisan or *Pedicularis canadensis* L. [lousewort]) Used in bruise ointment and to strengthen and bring on menses. PD, Ln.

Bindweed, Wild Potato (*Ipomoea, Convolvulus,* or *Calystegia* sp.)
"Its name, Wild Rhubarb, implies that it is a purgative" (Br). It was suggested as a laxative and also for kidney complaints (Ln). Reuter listed among wild plants, "Brionia . . . a powerful laxative. The plant is a Bind Weed"; however, *Bryonia* is a vine of a different family, the *Cucurbitaceae*.

Birthwort. *See* **Heart Snakeroot.**

Bittersweet (probably *Solanum dulcamara* L. rather than *Celastrus scandens* L). *See* **Nightshade.**

Blackberry (*Rubus* sp.)
"Good against . . . Looseness of the Belly" (Q); also used for kidney complaints and old sores. Ln, Hr, Mc, Pk. *See also* **Rose.**

Black Snakeroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa* [L.] Nuttall, *Actaea pachypoda* Ell., *Sanicula marilandica* L., or S. *canadensis*)
"Black Snakeroot . . . Is very useful in healing swellings and wounds. It is cooked in water, and the swelling washed with that, and a salve for wounds is also made from it. It is much used by the common folk" (Ru). Culpeper praised sanicle for healing wounds and sores as well as for "Lasks of the Belly" and "the Pains in the Bowels" and assorted other internal woes (Cp). Barton listed black snakeroot as *Actaea racemosa,* also called squaw root, rich-weed, and rattle-weed (Br). Special uses were as a gargle for a putrid sore throat and a decoction to cure the itch. Gunn wrote that Virginia snakeroot was also called black snakeroot. [3] Ln, Mc, Ru. *See also* **Snakeroot; Virginia Snakeroot.**

Bloodroot. *See* **Puccoon.**

Bloodwort. *See* **Dock; Puccoon.**

Bluestone. *See* **Vitriol.**

Boar Tusk Root. *See* **Tussick.**

Bohea Tea (*Camellia sinensis* [L.] O. Kuntze)

Newspaper advertisements document availability through Charleston and other ports. Eating bohea tea leaves was widely recommended for dropsy. Ln, SC, Cm.

Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum* L.; also known as ague weed, thorough stem or thoroughwort, cross wort, and Indian sage [Br])
According to Reuter, boneset was "so called because the Indians use it as splints in binding a broken arm or leg," or the name may have resulted from the plant's use against breakbone fever or dengue (Ru).

Bowman Root. *See* **Ipecacuanha.**

Brimstone (Crude Sulfur, Flowers of Sulfur, Purified Sulfur)
Quincy listed sulfur "us'd in little else besides Unguents for the Itch, and such cutaneous Eruptions, in which it is a good Ingredient, but a very stinking one" (Q). By the end of the eighteenth century, Cullen's materia medica listed sulfur as "a most proper and convenient laxative" (Cn). Each of the occurrences of sulfur in manuscript receipts was related to a skin disorder or to the perceived need for a laxative for varying complaints. Al, Hr, Mc, Tm, Ln, PD, Cm, Sm, Vr, Dd.

British Oil, British Rock Oil, Petroleum
This oil "extracted from a kind of fossil-coal has been cried up among the common people, under the name of British oil for rheumatic pains" (ED). It was "much commended in many outwards Complaints; as Rheumatic and Arthritic Pains, and Paralytic Limbs; because it is very warm and penetrating" (Q). Widely advertised in newspapers and available in coastal and backcountry stores. Vr.

Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga* L. [European], a native American Veronica sp., or another plant growing in wet places)
Especially used internally for scurvy and other complaints, according to Culpeper, "Brook-lime and Water-cresses are generally used together in Diet-drink" (Cp). PD, Mc.

Broom (*Cytisus scoparius* [L.] Link)
The berries of this European shrub were said to aid in dropsy because they "purgeth downwards, and draweth phlegmatic and watery Humours from the Joints" (Cp); however, it was also contended that broom ashes "so much extolled for purging off Water in Dropsies, are no better than any other Ashes" (Q). PD.

Burdock (*Arctium minus* [J. Hill] Bernh. or other sp.)
This Eurasian herb had naturalized early and was noted growing wild in piedmont Carolina by 1764. Quincy wrote that burdock was "in every one's Knowledge; and . . . much in use amongst the Country People. . . . The Seeds are by all Authors of the best Note esteem'd extremely diuretic" (Q). Domestic treatments

of dropsy and stone with burdock were undoubtedly based on diuretic properties. K'Eogh and Culpeper list burdock roots for consumption to "helpeth them that spit foul, mattery, and Bloody Phlegm" (Cp). [4] Mc, Al, Cm.

Burgundy Pitch (resin from Norway spruce)
For bite of mad dog. Dd.

Burnet (*Sanguisorba minor* Scopoli)
Although Quincy declared burnet "almost wore out of Practice" (Q), it was included in a salve for sore breasts following Culpeper's older herbal tradition. Bl.

Butter
Many receipts called for fresh or newly churned butter, although rancid butter entered into one preparation. May butter was prepared by melting fresh, unsalted butter in the sun repeatedly until the color became pale. Quincy considered May butter "a very triffling Medicine, and of no Use but as any simple Unguent or plain Lard may be" (Q). Clarified butter was suggested for internal use against dysentery or bloody flux. Al, PD, Tm, Hr, SC, Sm.

Butterfly Root. *See* **Milkweed.**

Butternut. *See* **Walnut, White.**

Cabbage, Collard (*Brassica oleracea* var. *capitata* L., B. *oleracea* var. *acephala* DC)
Leaves provided a convenient poultice or substitute for a cerecloth. Buchan recommended cabbage leaves applied warm to the side as relief for pleurisy (B). A newspaper clipping pasted into the SC manuscript claimed, "It will produce a local perspiration." Other domestic receipts employed cabbage or collards in poultices for sore throat and for rheumatism. Al, SC.

Calamine. *See* **Zinc.**

Calamus Aromaticus, Sweet Flag (*Acorus calamus* L.)
This "spicy bitterish Root" was recommended for "Cephalic and Stomachic Compositions" (Q); however, by 1791 calamus no longer entered "any officinal preparation," although it was still included in the materia medica (ED). Two lowcountry manuscripts documented its continued use in bitters for ague (Sm, PD).

Calomel. *See* **Mercury.**

Calves Foot (*Arum maculatum* L. [European] or the American *Arisaema triphyllum* [L.] Torr, also known as Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Indian Turnip)

The American calves foot was probably the plant Reuter noted useful for respiratory complaints (Ru). "The dried root boiled in milk . . . has been advantageously employed in consumption" (B-mm).

Camphor, Camphire (*Cinnamomum camphora* [L.] J. Presl.)
An Asian tree, "the most efficacious Diaphoretic known in Medicine," useful in "all kinds of Fevers, Malignities, and Epidemical Contagions" (Q). Used internally and externally for a wide variety of inflammations. Ln, Hr, Tm, PD, SC, Al, MR, Vr.

Cancer Root. *See* **Beechdrops.**

Canella Alba, Winter's Bark (*Canella Winterana* [L.] Gaertn)
A tree native to the West Indies, the Bahamas, and Florida. A mild aromatic bitter combined with aloe in the famous "sacred bitters," hiera-picra. "It is accounted a Species of Cinnamon, and therefore called canella alba or the white Cinnamon" (Q). Pk, As.

Cantharides, Spanish Flies, Blistering Beetles (*Lytta vesicatoria* [L.] or other *Lytta* sp.)
Several American species have also been used in medical treatment to blister the skin. Barton preferred the American *Cantharis* over the foreign insect (Br). Vr.

Caraway (*Carum carvi* L.)
The seed "'Tis Stomachic, Carminative, and good in the Colic" (Q). Vr.

Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum* [L.] Maton)
This perennial herb native to Indochina was cultivated in tropical America. Pk.

Carduus Benedictus, Blessed Thistle (*Cnicus benedictus* L.)
According to James, "by Nurses and the common people highly extol'd in disorders of the Stomach." [5] Cullen listed carduus as "a simple and very pure bitter" (Cn). Carduus benedictus and the related milk thistle, *Silybum marianum,* were cultivated in the medical garden in Bethabara, North Carolina by 1764. Al, Ru.

Carolina Ipecac. *See* **Ipecacuanha.**

Carolina Pinkroot. *See* **Pinkroot.**

Carrot (*Daucus carota* L.)
The seed "'tis accounted a good Diuretic; and preventive of the Stone" (Q). Most authors agreed that the wild carrot was best, the garden carrot "more luscious & not so efficacious" (MI). The use of carrot root in a gargle for sore throat reflected the carrot's reputed emollient properties. Al, Cm, Ml, Mc.

Cascarilla (*Croton eluteria* Benn or C. *cascarilla* Benn)
The bark of this Bahamian shrub was a substitute for cinchona. Vr.

Cassia (*Cassia fistula* L.)
A native tree of India, also grown in the West Indies and South America. The pulp of the cassia fruit was considered "a gentle Purge, not much stronger than Syrup of Violets" (Q). Vr. *See also* **Senna.**

Castor-Oil Plant (*Ricinus communis* L.)
The oil from the seeds gained popularity as a cathartic during the final quarter of the eighteenth century: "It is an active medicine, & very expeditious in the operation; but yet the short time, before its operation, is an age of distress." [6] Domestic practitioners recorded receipts meant to make castor oil "pleasant." Sm, Tm, Hr, PD, Vr.

Catnip, Nep, Catmint (*Nepeta cataria* L.)
"It is a moderately aromatic plant, of a strong smell, resembling a mixture of mint and penny-royal; of the virtues of which it likewise participates" (ED). Lenoir's use of catnip for a white swelling seems atypical. Ln. *See also* **Mint; Pennyroyal.**

Caustic. *See* **Lye.**

Caustic, Lunar (silver nitrate). Vr.

Cedar, Eastern Red. *See* **Juniper.**

Centaury (*Centaurium erythraea* Rafn. or the American centaury, *Sabatia angularis* [L.] Pursh)
Centaury was ranked "an excellent bitter" (Q). This member of the gentian family "should be constantly substituted for that of gentian, as it may be more cheaply prepared" (Cn). Used in remedies for fever, cachexy, scurvy. Sm, PD, Mc, Ru. See *also* **Gentian.**

Chamber Lye. *See* **Urine.**

Chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile* [L.] All. [Roman chamomile] or perhaps *Matricaria recutita* L. [German chamomile])
Moravian records listed Roman chamomile cultivated in piedmont North Carolina during the mid-eighteenth century (MR). "It easeth all the Pains of the Cholick and Stone, and all Pains and Torments of the Belly" (Cp). Kidney stones and "clogging" certainly fit into that category. In addition to internal doses, chamomile was administered as a clyster (enema) for stone or for intestinal blockage. Quincy stated, "Outwardly it is a good Emollient and Ripener in Cataplasms"

(Q). Fitting into that role are chamomile poultices for sprains or strains, for inflammation in the face, and for a white swelling as well as green ointment, bruise ointment, and a salve for sore breasts—all receipts drawn from commonplace books. Sm, Cm, Al, Hr, PD, Tm, Bl, Vr.

Cherry (wild *Prunus serotina* Ehrh. or *Prunus virginiana* L)
"The bark of the wild cherry tree is powerfully tonic, and has been frequently substituted for the Peruvian bark, with great success." (B). Bl.

Chestnut (*Castanea dentata* [Marsh.] Borkh)
The precedent is unclear for application of chestnut leaves externally to remedy snakebite, as recorded by Doddridge (Dd).

Chickweed (*Stellaria media* [L.] Cyrillo or other sp.)
The older herbals recommended chickweed for all sorts of swellings and sores, but by 1736, "it is now rarely used in Medicine" (Q). The Cameron manuscript notation of its use in dropsy does not seem to fit into mainstream tradition. Cm.

Chicory, Succory (*Cichorium intybus* L)
Chicory in diet broths or drinks reflects its employment for scurvy. It was also a traditional remedy for liver ailments. Mc.

China. *See* **Cinchona.**

China Root. *See* **Sarsaparilla; Spikenard.**

Cinchona, Peruvian Bark, Jesuit's Bark, Bark, China (*Cinchona* sp.)
This South American tree became well known in European and North American medicine during the eighteenth century. The cinchona bark was considered "one of the most considerable articles of the materia medica [and] the most frequently employed" (Cn). The bitter quinine found in this bark was, and is, a specific for curing malaria. Domestic receipts including the bark were aimed at fevers and agues but were also employed against worms, diseased spleens, laxes, and weak stomachs. Cinchona was infused in wine for a gargle to ease sore throat. PD, Sm, Hr, SC, Mc, Al, MR, Bd, Vr.

Cinnamon (**Cinnamomum zeylanicum** Blume or C. *loureirii* Nees)
The bark of an Asian tree. "This is not only an admirable Astringent, and a great Strengthner of the Stomach and Bowels, but also a good Cephalic. There are no kind of Defluxions or Weaknesses but what it is of service in" (Q). Al, Hr, PD. Also *Cinnamomum cassia* (Nees) Nees and Eberm. ex Blume. Buds and bark used. *See also* **Canella Alba.**

Cinquefoil, Tormentil (*Potentilia canadensis* L. or other sp., *Potentilia erecta* [L.] Räuschel [European species])
"Called in some Counties, Five-fingered Grass," according to Culpeper, who recommended leaves or roots for numerous internal complaints as well as "to stay the Bleeding of Wounds" (Cp). Similarly, a German herbalist was said to have run through "most chronical Distempers in its Commendation, as it is not unusual with many German Writers to do" (Q). Popularity was apparently waning, at least in England, for Quincy declared potentilia "quite out of use." The frontier uses of cinquefoil for "inward weakness" and for wounds followed earlier herbal traditions. Al, Ru, Vr.

Clove (*Syzygium aromaticum* [L.] Merrill and L. M. Avery)
Native to Molucca Islands and Philippines, by the late eighteenth century, cloves were cultivated in the East Indies and tropical Africa and were introduced to tropical America. Quincy noted, "it is very warm, and agreeable to the Nerves, it enters into the Composition of many Cathartics, as a Corrector" (Q). Powdered cloves were "much used, likewise for the Toothache, dropt upon a little Cotton or Lint, and stuffed into the Hollow" (Q). Cloves were included in clove water, ointments, and in decoctions of bark. Hr, PD.

Cochineal Insect (*Dactylopius coccus* Costa)
These insects live on cacti in tropical America. The part used is the female scalelike insect, which dies after laying eggs, her body covering the eggs or larvae. Used as a red dye and food coloring as well as in medicine. "The Use of these in Medicine is as an Alexipharmic [remedy against poisons]; they raise Sweat and are also accounted Cordial [that] agreeably tinges" medicines (Q). Hr, PD, Sm.

Coffee, Coffee Berries (*Coffea arabica* L.)
Coffee was suggested for "afar-gone Consumption" (Pk). Although Quincy wrote that coffee berries "are not employ'd in Medicine" (Q), Buchan recommended their use against kidney stones (B). Barton recommended strong coffee in cases of suppressed menses (Br). Most usage of coffee in domestic cures fell into the role of flavoring agent or a vehicle for administering more powerful medicine. Pk, PD, Al. The term *coffee berry* was used for the coffee bean or seed or for the buckthorn berry (*Rhamnus caroliniana* Walter).

Collard. *See* **Cabbage.**

Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara* L.)
Barton noted that Asarum was also called *coltsfoot* (Br). Use of coltsfoot among domestic healers fit Quincy's recommendation: "It is by all received as an excellent Pectoral . . . frequently in extemporaneous Prescription" (Q). Al, Ru, Bd. *See also* **Heart Snakeroot.**

Columba, Columbo (*Jateorrhiza palmata* [Lamarck] Miers)
From Africa and East Indies, this bitter root was used in gastrointestinal distress (ED). In Holland and Germany, columbo was well known as remedy for dysentery (Cn). Cullen wrote of "a new accession to the materia medica," a North American plant, *Frasera,* "well known by the name of columbo" now (*Frasera caroliniensis* Walter) (Cn). This plant of the Carolina coastal plain may have been the Columbo known and used by Horry. Hr, Vr. Barton suggested both the native yellow root (*Xanthorhiza simplicissima* Marshall) and the goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis* L.) as substitutes for Columbo (Br).

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale* L.)
Employed for coughs or in salve for sores, following the advice of early herbals. By 1791, "it is so little employed in practice in Britain, as to have no place in our pharmacopoeias" (ED). Hr, Sm.

Copper
Metallic or in compound, common in preparations for sores and wounds or for the eyes. Sin, Hr. *See also* **Verdigris; Vitriol.**

Copperas (iron or copper sulfates). *See* **Vitriol.**

Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum* L.)
The seeds were considered "strengthning to the Stomach, and Carminative" (Q). Hr.

Crabs' Claws
The claw tips from a type of sea crab were used similarly to crabs' eyes, generally as an absorbent to ease diarrhea (ED). Vr.

Crabs' Eyes
"These are a stony Concretion in the Head of the Craw-fish, and not the Eye of the Creature" (Q). Modern sources identify crabs' eyes as calcium carbonate concretions from the digestive tract of crawfish or crabs. Crabs' eyes were included in a remedy for piles. PD.

Cress. *See* **Mustard.**

Cucumber Tree (*Magnolia acuminata* [L.] L.)
The use of this native magnolia bark in bitters for rheumatism was similar to use of the related tulip tree. Ln. *See* also **Bay; Poplar.**

Cudweed. *See* **Everlasting.**

Cypress, Bald (*Taxodium distichum* [L.] L. Richard)
According to Lawson, the cypress tree yields "a most odoriferous Balsam, that infallible cures all new and green Wounds." [7] Hr.

Dandelion, Dandy Lion (*Taraxacum officinale* Wiggers)
The manuscript authors' uses of dandelion in fever and scurvy diverged from published traditions of use in liver complaints and to increase urine flow. PD, Mc.

Diachylon. *See* **Lead.**

Digitalis, Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea* L.)
Digitalis was long used against a variety of complaints (Cp, Q), but by the end of the eighteenth century common uses were those that Horry noted—for dropsy and consumption—and also as treatment for mania (ED). Hr, Vr.

Dittany (*Conila origanoides* [L.] Britt.)
Quincy declared the European dittany, from Crete, a marjoram (*Origanum dictamnus* L.), "of little use" (Q), and, indeed, dittany is seldom mentioned in European medicine. The popularity of American dittany seemed to have developed during the eighteenth century. Byrd reported dittany a "Sure Defense" against horseflies if a bunch of it were stuck into the horse's bridle (Bd). Dittany appeared in Tennent's decoctions for treating "a slow fever" and rattlesnake bite. By 1830 Gunn wrote, "This handsome little plant belongs exclusively to America, and is known to almost every farmer and his family . . . every old lady in the country has more or less used Dittany tea in colds" and for fevers and nervous headaches.[8] Al, Ln. *See also* **Pennyroyal** (another member of the mint family).

Dock (*Rumex* sp.; *Rumex crispus* L. is a common species throughout the Carolinas)
Dock root was employed for the itch. PD. Culpeper listed bloodwort as synonomous with dock (Cp); however, the "blood wort" of the Allen manuscript's cancer receipt might have been bloodroot, a common ingredient in cancer cures. Al.

Dogwood (*Cornus florida* L.)
By 1816 dogwood had "long been employed in intermittent fevers . . . possessing properties closely allied to the Peruvian bark" (B-mm). Almost a century earlier, Byrd recorded, "Several of our men had Intermitting fevers, but were soon restor'd to their Health again by proper Remedies. Our chief Medicine was Dogwood Bark, which we used, instead of that of Peru, with good Success" (Bd). Among the domestic manuscripts, dogwood bark was used for kidney complaints, on old

sores, and in a cancer salve as well as in fever medicines. In addition, the dogwood buds were used against colic, and the wood was favored for toothbrushes. Ln, Al, Tm.

Dragon's blood (*Daemonorops* sp.)
This gum from the fruit of an East Indian palm was suggested for preserving teeth and in treating the whites. The name *dragon's blood* was applied to additional red plant extracts such as brazilwood and kino. PD, Hr. Brazilian *Croton* species also yield a dragon's-blood resin.

Dung
Animal excrement was commonly employed in medicine, not simply as a folk cure but as part of the pharmacopoeia of the day under the Latin name *stercus*. Quincy listed the dung of cow, dog, goose, horse, hog, peacock, and pigeon."The Excrements of most Birds are accounted hot, nitrous, and penetrating" (Q). Although discounted as "almost quite laid aside in Practice" (Q), hen's, white-hen's, and fowl's dung appear among domestic remedies to be applied for frostbite and yaws and in green ointment. Buchan wrote, "In some parts of the country the peasants apply to a recent bruise a cataplasm of fresh cow-dung. I have . . . never knew it to fail to have a good effect" (B). However, Buchan discounted the practice of applying dog dung to a sore throat. Thomas Johnson suggested an old-sheep-dung poultice. In domestic manuscripts, both horse- and cow-dung poultices were applied to serious sore throats. Internal doses containing dung included hen dung in pills for "the pail disorder" (Austin Family Memorandum Book) and deer dung in pills to combat yaws. Al, PD, Ml, Hr, Austin Family Memorandum Book.

Earthworms. *See* **Worms.**

Egg
The yolk was employed "To make Castor Oil pleasant" (Hr) and in preparations for various respiratory complaints, jaundice, or diarrhea as well as in salve for sores and in clyster for stone. Egg white was used for old sores, scald head, jaundice, and in eye waters. Hr, PD, Tm, Ln, Sm, Al.

Elder, Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis* L. or the European *Sambucus nigra* L.) "This Tree has not one Part but is used in Pharmacy" (Q). The use of flowers, bark, roots, and leaves discovered among manuscripts closely echo Quincy's remedies. External uses were diverse—for swellings, burns, toothache, scald head, snakebite. The operation as purgative, diuretic, and emetic was also endorsed by Sydenham as noted by Cullen (Cn). According to Culpeper, "Either Leaves or Bark of Elder stripped upwards as you gather it, causeth Vomiting; but stripped downwards, it purgeth downwards" (Cp). Al, PD, Tm, Hr, Ru, Km.

Elecampane (*Inula helenium* L.)
This remedy was "Used to make elecampane wine" and grew in the Moravian community (Ru). "The ancients entertained a high opinion of elecampane, which is recommended for promoting expectoration in humoral asthma and coughs. . . . it is said to excite urine and loosen the belly" (B-mm). Hr, Al, Vr, Ru, Dd.

Elm, Slippery (*Ulmus rubra* Muhl.) and **American** (*U. Americana* L.)
Elm bark enjoyed a long popularity against burns, wounds, and "obstinate cutaneous eruptions" (Cr, ED). PD, Mc, Dd.

Epsom salts. *See* Salts.

Equisetum. *See* **Horsetail.**

Everlasting, Life Everlasting, Cudweed (*Gnaphalium obtusifolium* L. or *Anaphalis margaritacea* L. Benth and Hook)
Although Quincy wrote that "the modern Pharmacy makes little use of it" (Q), Lenoir recorded life everlasting for inducing sweating and as a poultice for toothache.

Fat, Oil, Grease.
Fat of rattlesnakes, geese, wolves, bears, raccoons, groundhogs, polecats (skunks), or foxes was employed in an assortment of complaints, as was fat of domesticated animals. For example, snake, bear, or hog fat was laid on snakebite, while frostbite was rubbed with "fat of dung-hill fowls" (Sm). Such treatment was thought especially proper for rheumatism. According to Lawson, "The Oil of the Bear is very Sovereign for Strains, Aches, and Old Pains." [9] Ln, Sm, Pk, MR, Dd, Km, Ru, Bd.

Featherfew. *See* **Feverfew.**

Fennel, Sweet (*Foeniculum vulgare* Miller)
"Fennel is good to break Wind, to provoke Urine, and ease the Pains of the Stone, and help break it" (Cp), among a number of other uses. Fennel seeds were "not undeservedly looked upon as good stomachics and carminatives" (ED). Hr, Al, Mc, PD, Vr. *See also* **Anise.**

Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenumgraecum* L.)
The mid-eighteenth-century Moravians followed in Gerard's old herbal tradition, using fenugreek seeds for coughs and colds. In contrast, Quincy noted fenugreek seeds "very little used inwardly" but valuable in clysters, cataplasms, and unguents (Q). Ru, Vr.

Fern. *See* **Adder's-Tongue, Maidenhair Fern, Polypody, Walnut Fern.**

Feverfew, Featherfew (*Chrysanthemum parthenium* [L.] Bernh. [syn. *Matricaria parthenium* L.])
The use of feverfew in healing applications was ancient, although by 1791 it was declared "now so little employed in Britain, that it has no place in our pharmacopoeias" (ED). Southern manuscripts included feverfew in salves, ointments, and poultices and followed Culpeper's idea of feverfew for female disorders, as "a general Strengthener of their Wombs, and remedy such Infirmities as a careless Midwife hath there caused" (Cp). PD, Hr, Ln.

Fig (*Ficus carica* L.)
Figs were administered internally for costiveness and both internally and externally for cancer. PD, Pk, PS, SC.

Figwort (*Scrophularia marilandica* L.)
"formerly some repute against scrophulus disorders and the piles . . . but modern practitioners expect no such virtues from it" (ED). Mc.

Filbert. *See* **Hazelnut.**

Fir, Balsam. *See* **Spruce.**

Fish Glue. *See* Isinglass.

Flax, Flaxseed (*Linum usitatissimum* L.)
Recommended "not only in Diseases of the Lungs, but in some Colics, Obstructions of the Urinary Passages, and in all Suspicions of inward Ulcerations" (Q). Al, PD, As.

Florence Oil. *See* **Sweet Oil.**

Flowers of Zinc. *See* **Zinc.**

Flux Root. *See* **Milkweed.**

Foxglove. *See* **Digitalis.**

Frankincense, Olibanum (*Boswellia carteri* Birdw. or other sp.)
Resin from a small Middle Eastern or African tree used in Turlington's balsam and as external application for dropsy. Hr, PD, Vr.

Galbanum (*Ferula galbaniflua* Boiss. and Buhse or *F. rubricaulis* Boiss.)
Middle Eastern gum related to asafoetida used in pills for colic. "It loosens the

Belly, both inwardly and externally used. It is often met with amongst extemporaneous Prescriptions . . . but it enters very few Shop-Medicines" (Q). Hr, Vr.

Gall (from ox or bullock)
Suggested as remedy for sprains, strains, and bruises. PD.

Gall, Nutgall
Excrescences formed by a plant when certain insects insert an egg into the plant tissues. Galls formed on oak trees were especially valued. "Their Use in trying the Steel-Water, is sufficiently known to all. . . . they make so necessary an Ingredient in Writing-Ink. They are accounted effectual in stopping Haemorrhages; and therefore Ink is put up the Nose to stop Bleeding" (Q). Vr.

Garlic (*Allium sativum* L. or the wild field garlic *A. vineale* L.)
"The poore mans Treakle, that is, a remedy for all diseases" (Cp). A garlic poultice or ointment applied to the feet was common remedy for chest complaints as well as for palsy, sciatica, and fevers. Sydenham held the opinion that for many ailments no medicine operated "more powerfully than garlic applied to the soles of the feet" (ED). Also, "Garlic bruised and applied to the skin readily inflames it; and applied for some time will raise a blister, as we have said of mustard and horseradish" (B-mm). Garlic was placed in the ear to alleviate deafness. Internal use of garlic was thought beneficial against croup, rheumatism, dropsy, and colic: "The stimulus of garlic taken into the stomach is readily communicated to the rest of the system" (Cn). Ln, Hr, Al, PD, Sm, Cm, Ml, Dd. *See also* **Onion.**

Gentian (*Gentiana catesbaei* Walter, *G. villosa* L., *Gentianella quinquefolia* [L.] Small, the European *G. lutea* L. or other sp.)
"It is extremely bitter. . . . It deservedly stands at the head of the Stomachic Class. . . . and a great Antidote against many kinds of Poisons. . . . Some Authors extol this, beyond all Credibility . . . and rank it almost with the Peruvian Bark in Intermittents" (Q). Gentian was included in the popular Stoughton's Elixir and other bitters. Hr, Al, Vr. *See also* Centaury.

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe)
The root of this plant of the East and West Indies was considered "hot and penetrating and therefore a great Warmer of the nervous Parts" (Q). This stimulating effect was desirable in such cases as cachexy, costiveness, or a cold as well as for certain poultices. Cm, Ln, PD, Al.

Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius* L. or Asian sp.)
Most period authors discounted the medicinal virtue of ginseng, but Byrd was enthusiastic: "Its vertues are, that it gives an uncommon Warmth and Vigour to the Blood, and frisks the Spirits, beyond any other Cordial" (Bd). Byrd consid-

ered ginseng excellent for almost every complaint but did not agree with the Chinese notion of ginseng as an aphrodisiac: "as a Help to bear Fatigue I us'd to chew a Root of Ginseng as I Walk't along" (Bd). Ln, Bl, Vr.

Glauber Salts. *See* **Salts.**

Goldenrod, Sweet (*Solidago odora* Ait. or other *Solidago* sp.)
Culpeper recommended goldenrod for everything from kidney stones to "staying the floodings of the body" to fastening loose teeth (Cp). Although goldenrod had "been much commended, formerly, as a Restorative and a Vulnerary," by 1736 it was considered "little in use in any Intention, either in the Shops, or extemporaneous Prescription" (Q). Yet goldenrod appears in personal manuscripts through the early 1800s in extemporaneous prescriptions for cleansing the blood, in remedies for dropsy, and as a tea to accompany Caesar's Cure. Al, Ln, Cm.

Grease. *See* **Fat.**

Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea* L.)
"mightily used both in the Shops and common Prescription. . . . It is not only prescribed in almost all Distempers of the Lungs and Breast, but also accounted good in Obstructions of the Visceras" (Q). Al, PD, Cm, Mc.

Guaiacum, Lignum Vitae, Tree of Life (*Guaiacum officinale* L.)
Resin from an evergreen tree native to West Indies and northern South America along with a smaller species, *G. sanctum,* of the Bahamas, Cuba, Haiti, and Florida "reckon'd a wonderful Sweetner, and Cleanser of the Blood" (Q). Wesley's diet drink for sores caused by scurvy contained guaiacum. Wesley also recommended gum guaiacum as "the best medicine I have met with for the chronic rheumatism" (W). Quincy suggested that guaiacum worked by "cleansing the Joints" (Q). Pk, Hr, PD, SC, Tm, Vr.

Gum. *See* **Storax.**

Gum Ammoniac (*Dorema ammoniacum* D. Don)
The gum or resin from the stem of this perennial herb that grows wild in Persia and southern Siberia was collected as tears, or lumps. Medical guides and personal manuscripts listed its use in respiratory complaints, on tumors and swellings, and for hysterical cases (ED). Sm, Hr, Vr.

Gum Arabic (*Acacia senegal* [L.] Willd. or other sp. of African acacia)
Although Cullen questioned the common belief that the mucilage of gum Arabic was "supposed to reach the bronchiae, and thereby to correct the acrimony that

occasions coughing, and especially supposed to reach the urinary passages" (Cn), personal manuscripts listed it both for cough and kidney stone. Al, Vr.

Gum Dragon, Tragacanth (*Astragalus gummifer* Labill. or other sp.)
This gum, exuded from thorny Asian shrubs, was included in the unusual receipt for fit cakes. PD.

Hartshorn. *See* **Ammonia, Ammonium Compounds.**

Hartstongue, Spleenwort (*Asplenium* or *Phyllitis* sp.)
Culpeper would have agreed with the Allen manuscript in using hartstongue for "inward weakness" of various sorts. Although this plant had long been "accounted binding and strengthning" (Q), Cullen's materia medica ascribed to hartstongue only a slight astringency, adding, "there is nothing more ridiculous than [Asplenium] having been so long considered as pectorals" (Cu). The origin of its use in scurvy is less clear. Al, Mc.

Hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.)
"The Seeds in the Berries beaten to Powder being drank in Wine, are held singular good against the Stone." (Cp). PD, Mc. Black haw roots were also suggested for kidney and venereal complaints. Ln.

Hazelnut, Filbert (*Corylus americana* Marsh. or *C. cornuta* Marsh.)
Brickell suggested that "a Decoction of the inner Rind of the Tree, drank for some Days together is good against the Strangury and kill Worms." [10] The nuts had been "found very useful in affording relief to several persons labouring under nephritic and perhaps calculous affections [stones]" (B-mm). The origin of Pinckney's use of hazel ashes in preparing a lye "To make the Hair Grow" is unclear. Al, Pk.

Heal-All, Self-Heal (*Prunella vulgaris* L.)
"an especial remedy for all green wounds, to solder the lips of them, and to keep the place from any further inconveniences" (Cp). Al.

Heart Leaf. *See* **Wild Ginger.**

Heart Snakeroot.
Name used for several herbs of the birthwort family. Reuter noted "Hart Snakeroot, the English call it Milk Snakeroot . . . is a powerful antidote for the bite of a snake" (Ru). *See also* **Snakeroot; Virginia Snakeroot; Wild Ginger.**

Hellebore (*Helleborus* sp. and *Veratrum* sp.)

H. niger was sometimes called *melampodium*. The traditional use of *Veratrum,* or white hellebore, for the itch echoed Quincy's recommendation "for cutaneous Foulnesses" (Q). Hr, Vr.

Hemlock (*Conium maculatum* L.)
Culpeper classified hemlock "very dangerous, especially to be taken inwardly. It may safely be applied to Inflammations, Tumours, and Swellings" (Cp). PD.

Hemp (*Cannabis sativa* L.)
The suggested use of hemp to bring on menses (Tm) seems counter to the advice from herbals and dispensatories that hemp seeds "stayeth" fluxes and bleeding.

Henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger* L.)
The seed of this member of the nightshade family was traditionally used for pains and inflammations. Topical application of henbane for allaying toothache was an ancient practice. Ru. *See also* **Nightshade.**

Hepatica. *See* **Liverwort.**

Hiera-Picra.
A combination of aloe and canella alba. Sm, Pk.

Hippo. *See* **Ipecacuanha.**

Hog's Louse. *See* **Wood Louse.**

Hog's Tusk. *See* **Tussick.**

Holly (*Ilex* sp.)
Suggested for fevers (Ru).

Hollyhock. *See* **Mallow.**

Honey
"a remedy so excellent" for throat and chest complaints and in various other preparations. Hr, Ln, SC, Al, PD, Tm, Mc, Ru, As.

Honeybee. *See* **Bee.**

Hop (*Humulus lupulus* L.)
"The odour of hops hung in a bed has been said to induce sleep after opium had failed" (ED). Also considered "one of the most agreeable of the strong bitters" (ED). SC, Cm.

Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare* L.)
Culpeper listed its usefulness to "those that have taken Poison, or are stung or bitten by venomous Serpents" (Cp), while the *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* verified traditional use of horehound in bitters (ED). Sm, Hr, Bl, Ln, SC, Ru.

Horsemint. *See* **Mint.**

Horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana* P. Gaertn., B. Mey., and Scherb.)
"A syrup made by boiling scraped horseradish in brown sugar, is an excellent remedy . . . to promote expectoration, and remove hoarseness. . . . It is greatly recommended by Sydenham in dropsies" (B-mm). Ln, Mc, Al. Sometimes called *scurvy grass,* horseradish was endorsed for cure of scurvy and many other "chronical Distempers" (ED). Mc. *See also* **Scurvy Grass.**

Horsetail, Equisetum (*Equisetum arvense* L. or *E. hyemale* L.)
Considered useful in healing "inward Ulcers, and the Excoriation of the Entrails, Bladder, &c." (Cp). Al.

Houseleek, Sedum (*Sempervivum tectorum* L. or *Sedum* sp.)
Quincy listed this plant as little used except "amongst the common People, who have got a way of managing it into an Ointment with Cream, for Burns and Inflammations" (Q). Tin, Bl.

Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis* L.)
Hyssop was widely thought to aid respiratory complaints but had generally fallen from use by late eighteenth century. Thomson suggested hyssop for a class of hysteric complaints. [11] Cullen suggested hyssop for "stagnating fluids," sore nipples, and to bring on menses (Cn). Ln.

Indian Physic. *See* **Ipecacuanha.**

Indian Pink. *See* **Pinkroot.**
Indigo (*Indigofera* sp.), **Wild Indigo** (*Baptisia tinctoria* [L.] R. Brown)
Used for throat sickness and respiratory problems, against chiggers, and "To stop a mortification" (Ln). These uses seem not to follow common European tradition. MR, Cm, Ln.

Ipecacuanha, Ipecac, Ippo, Hippo, Indian Physic, Bowman Root, Brazil root (*Cephaelis ipecacuanha* [Brotero] A. Richard); **American Ipecac** (*Gillenia trifoliata* [L.] Moench or *G. stipulata* [Muhl.] Baillon); **Carolina Ipecac, Wild Ipecac** (*Euphorbia ipecacuanhae* L.)

Reuter noted, "Hypocaquana is a Snakeroot which is often used by the apothecary. It is a laxative" (Ru). Byrd classed it "an Excellent Vomit, and generally cures intermitting Fevers, and Bloody Fluxes" (Bd). Ln, Hr, Pk, Sm, Ru, Dd, Bd, Vr.

Ippo. *See* **Ipecacuanha.**

Isinglass, Fish Glue
Derived from air bladders of sturgeon or other fish. Used as an adhesive in Horry's court plaster; also "reckon'd very helpful in Female Weaknesses" (Q). Hr.

Jalap (*Exogonium purga* [L.] Bentham)
Mexican *Convolvulaceae,* or morning-glory relative. As a common purgative, "it is so gentle that it stands in need of no Corrector" (Q). Hr, Al, PD, Ln, Vr.

Jamaica Pepper. *See* **Allspice.**

Jamestown Weed. *See* **Jimsonweed.**

Jerusalem Oak, Wormseed (*Chenopodium ambrosioides* L. [introduced from South America] or *C. botrys* L. [introduced from Eurasia])
Jerusalem oak as a remedy for worms was well established in America, as evidenced in personal manuscripts. The dispensatories suggested use in respiratory disorders. Hr, Bl, Rs.

Jesuit's Bark. *See* **Cinchona.**

Jewelweed. *See* **Touch-Me-Not.**

Jimsonweed, Jamestown Weed, Thorn Apple (*Datura stramonium* L.)
The poisonous and narcotic properties of this member of the nightshade family were recognized. Brickell wrote, "it is excellent good in asswaging all manner of Inflammations . . . but if it be taken Inwardly, it immediately occasions a Giddiness and Madness." [12] By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Barton endorsed the jimsonweed seed for mania, melancholia, epilepsy, rheumatism, and "with advantage, in ulcerous affections attended with high irritation Even in cancer they have afforded essential relief" (Br). Cm. *See also* **Nightshade.**

Juniper (*Juniperus communis* L.), **Eastern Red Cedar** (*Juniperus virginiana* L.)
"All the Parts of this Tree are of a balsamic nature" (Q). The berries were conveniently collected and stored. "Their most celebrated and remarkable Properties are in deterging and scouring the Viscera. . . . for this reason they are frequently

met with in Compositions, both Officinal and Extemporaneous for Jaundice, Cachexies, Dropsies and Difficulty of Urine" (Q). PD, Ln, Ml, Al, Vr.

Kermes Mineral
Mixture of antimony trioxide and trisulfide suggested for pleurisy (Hr). The cochineal insect was also sometimes called *alkermes* or *kermes*.

Lapis Calaminaris. *See* **Zinc.**

Laudanum. *See* **Poppy.**

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia* Mill)
Categorized as "a powerful stimulant to the nervous system" (Cn), lavender was used in ointments and salves. PD, Vr.

Lavender Cotton (*Santolina chamaecyparissus* L.)
Included in green ointment. PD.

Lead
The dangers from lead poisoning were recognized. "It is of a cold, drying Quality, which makes those who work in it apt to be paralytic, and troubled with a strange kind of Colic" (Q). Among domestic, recipes lead compounds found use in eye waters, salves, cerecloths, and corn treatments. Quincy and others favored "sugar of lead" (lead acetate): "It is mixed with Pomatums and other Unguents, for hot tetterous Humours, and many Diseases of the Skin. . . . It is also used in Collyriums for the Eyes" (Q). Tm, Vr. Other lead compounds in use by domestic practitioners included white lead (lead carbonate) (Al, Pk); red lead (lead orthoplumbate with lead monoxide) (Cm, Al); diachylon (lead or litharge and olive oil, lead oleate) (Hr); and litharge (lead monoxide) (Pk).

Leek. *See* **Onion.**

Lesser Celandine. *See* **Pilewort.**

Life Everlasting. *See* **Everlasting.**

Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra* L.)
A Eurasian shrub. Most authors agreed with Culpeper that it was useful "for all Griefs of the Breasts and Lungs . . . in all Pains of the Reins, the Strangury, and Heat of Urine" (Cp). Licorice appeared frequently in bitters and diet drinks, in Daffy's elixir, and as "a Corrector of some Cathartics . . . Infusions of Sena and Rhubarb are scarce ever order'd without it" (Q). Hr, Pk, Al, Vr.

Life, Tree of. *See* **Guaiacum.**

Lignum vitae. *See* **Guaiacum.**

Lime, Limewater
Mollusk, oyster, mussel, snail, and egg shells were used to make lime: "wash the shells well with a brush both inside and out after having scraped out the Muscles clean, put them into the fire and burn them, then powder them fine and sift them" (Hr). The Allen manuscript contains a receipt for limewater: "pour five Quarts of Boiling Water on one & a half pounds of fresh Burnt Shels. . . . Mix it With Milk and Drink it is helpfull to ye Stomach" (Al). The action of water on quicklime (calcium oxide) produced slaked lime (calcium hydroxide). *See also* **Lye.**

Linseed. *See* **Flax, Flaxseed.**

Liverwort (*Hepatica acutiloba* DC. or *H. americana* [DC.] Ker-Gawl)
Culpeper wrote, "It is a singular good Herb for all the Diseases of the Liver" (Cp); however, Quincy countered, "That Signature-Philosophy is now exploded" (Q). The ash-colored liverwort was "accounted a Specific for the bite of a mad Dog" (Q) when combined with pepper to make Dr. Mead's "pulvis antilyssus." Al, Mc.

Locust, Black (*Robinia pseudoacacia* L.)
Perhaps the similarity to acacia (gum arabic) prompted use of the locust for consumption. Ln.

Lye (potassium hydroxide)
"The caustic alkali (potassium hydroxide, sodium hydroxide, and/or calcium hydroxide) or soap-lees, is the medicine chiefly in vogue at present for the stone" (B). The Allen manuscript author copied the following directions from Buchan: "The caustic alkali may be prepared by mixing two parts of quick lime with one of pot ashes, and suffering them to stand till the lixivium be formed which must be carefully filtrated before it be used. If the solution dose not happen readily, a small quantity of water may be added" (Al). Ln, Al. Potash or salt of tartar (potassium carbonate) was produced by dripping lye from wood ashes, evaporating to dryness, and calcining in an iron pot. Hr, Vr. Pearl ash is further refined potassium carbonate. Ln. *See also* **Ashes.**

Mace. *See* **Nutmeg.**

Magnesia Alba. *See* **Salts.**

Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum* L. and *A. capillus-veneris* L.)

"It is used in Decays of the Lungs: and therefore enters much into the Compositions of Pectorals; both in the Shops, and common Prescription" (Q). "For being green, it loosenth the Belly, and voideth Choler and Phlegm from the Stomach and Liver; it cleanseth the Lungs, and by rectifying the Blood, causeth a good Colour to the whole Body" (Cp). Southern domestic practitioners followed these traditions, using maidenhair for "inward weakness," coughs and colds, dropsy, and cachexy. Ln, Al, Pk, Ru, Bd.

Mallow (various sp. of *Malva, Hibiscus, Alcea,* and *Althaea*)
The mallow most commonly specified in medical receipts was the marshmallow (*Althaea officinalis* L.), but the hollyhock (*Alcea rosea* L.) also appears (Pk). All usage of mallows among manuscript receipts follows the tradition of the old herbals and early dispensatories. "This Plant affords a very soft mucilaginous Substance. . . . a great service in Dysenteries . . . and in many kinds of Colics . . . in Obstructions of the Reins and Urinary Passages. . . . It is much used in Glysters, and sometimes in maturating Cataplasms" (Q). Both roots and leaves were recommended for multiple purposes, including "opening the streight Passages, and making them slippery, whereby the Stone may descend more easily" (Cp). Tm, Ml, Al, PD, Hr, Pk.

Manna (*Fraxinus ornus* L.)
The dried exudation of an ash tree native to southern Europe, "a mild, agreeable laxative" (ED). Hr, Sm, Vr.

Marigold (*Calendula officinalis* L. or *Tagetes* sp.)
"Well known in the Kitchen as well as the Shops" (Q) and used similarly to saffron. "Comforter of the Heart and Spirits" (Cp). PD.

Marine Acid. *See* **Spirits of Sea Salt.**

Mastic Tree (*Pistacia lentiscus* L.)
Resin of a tree native to the Mediterranean region, especially the Greek islands. Mastic was esteemed as a great strengthener, used internally and externally, "both in the officinal Compositions, and extemporaneous Prescriptions" (Q). Al, PD, Vr.

Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum* L.)
Other names mentioned by Barton were mandrake, ipecacuanha, and wild lemon (Br). According to Ewell, "The Indians dry it in the shade, and powder it for use." Featured in Bigelow's *American Medical Botany* as "a sure and active cathartic. . . . It has also had the character in the Southern States of curing intermittent fever." [13] Ru.

Melissa, Balm, Baum (*Melissa officinalis* L.)
Culpeper's herbal recommended a syrup of balm or the dried herb "be kept in

every gentlewoman's house, to relieve the weak stomachs and sick bodies of their poor sickly neighbors" (Cp). Quincy strongly advised infusing melissa in alcohol: "The Plant is a good Cordial, and makes an agreeable Ingredient in many Alexipharmic Waters. Any other form it is not fit for" (Q). Southern manuscript authors chose to include balm in ointment as well as infusions. The fresh leaves were applied to sores. PD, Al, Mc.

Mercury, Quicksilver
Buchan endorsed conservative use of mercury in domestic medicine, while Wesley, Tennent and other practical authors warned against mercurials as "far too strong for common men to grapple with." The rather widespread use of quicksilver and mercury salts among manuscript sources suggested either ignorance or disregard of cautions. Mercury was administered internally as well as externally, "recommended as of great efficacy, both in the prevention and cure" (B) of hydrophobia. Mercurial pills could be manufactured at home (following Buchan's instructions) by combining equal quantities of quicksilver and honey with castile soap and powdered licorice or bread crumbs. Common or blue mercurial ointment or Neapolitan ointment was manufactured by "rubbing together equal quantities of hog's-lard and quicksilver" (B). Salts of mercury were employed, particularly in treating mad dog bite and venereal disease: "One of the most common preparations of mercury now in use [for venereal disease] is the corrosive sublimate [mercury bichloride]" (B). Calomel (mercurous chloride) was well known as a purgative and in ointments. Lenoir noted, "Calomel is chiefly Mercury and ought to be carefully maneged." Other mercury salts in use included turpeth mineral (mercuric subsulfate), Aethiop's mineral or the purer forms, vermilion and cinnabar (mercuric sulfide), red precipitate (mercuric oxide), white precipitate (mercuric ammonium chloride). Mc, Sm, Ln, Hr, Tm, SC, Rs, Vr.

Milk
"Milk is of more value in [consumption] than the whole materia medica" (B). Milk from any animal was deemed beneficial "in Consumptions, and as a Restorative" (Q). Culpeper and Wesley especially recommended human milk (Cp, W). The Thompson manuscript recommends applying human milk to sunburn. In numerous receipts milk was a secondary ingredient, acting as a vehicle for other medicinals while perhaps performing its role as restorative. PD, Pk, Al, Ln, Ml, Tm, Hr, Mc, SC, Sm, As, Dd, MR.

Milk Snakeroot. *See* **Heart Snakeroot.**

Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca* L. or other sp.); **Pleurisy Root, Butterfly Root, Flux Root** (*Asclepias tuberosa* L.)
As the name suggests, the root was commonly used for pleurisy, consumption, and dropsy. Ln, Cm, Ru.

Mindererus, Spirit of. *See* **Ammonia, Ammonium Compounds; Hartshorn.**

Mint, Peppermint (*Mentha X piperira* L.), **Spearmint** (*M. spicata* L.), and Others Added to medicine for dysentery, used to mask taste of castor oil. PD, Sm, Hr, Vr. Horsemint (*Monarda* sp., *Pycnanthemum* sp., *Cunila* sp, or *Mentha* sp.) was "stronger and more rank in Smell, and accounted very detersive" (Q) for gravel or stone. Tm, Cm, Vr.

Molasses, Treacle
In eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century America, any sweet syrup was termed *molasses*. Sugarcane syrup was imported from the West Indies. Locally produced molasses included maple syrup and even cooked pumpkin. The sorghum syrup now known as molasses was not introduced until after the period considered here. *Treacle* had two meanings in medical context: (1) a type of molasses resulting from sugar refining, and (2) a sovereign remedy or cure, a medicinal compound composed of many ingredients. PD, Al, SC, Ln, Sm.

Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca* L.)
According to old herbal tradition, motherwort was useful for women's problems and more, but by 1791 it was, "supposed to be useful in hysteric disorders . . . though . . . now rejected both from the London and Edinburgh pharmacopoeias" (ED). Ln.

Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris* L.)
Following the old herbal tradition, Quincy wrote in 1736, "It is in greatest Esteem amongst Midwifes and Nurses" (Q), but by the end of the century mugwort was "formerly celebrated as uterine and antihysteric . . . now, however, very little employed in medicine" (ED). Pk.

Mulberry (*Morus rubra* L. or *M. alba* L.)
Leaves applied to wrist "to abate a flow of Nature" (PD) follows Culpeper, who also recommended mulberry leaves to stay other bleedings (mouth, nose, hemorrhoids, wound) "being bound unto the Places" (Cp).

Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus* L.)
Period medical guides listed mullein leaves and buds for dysentery, consumption, and various internal and external inflammations. James Ewell suggested a mullein poultice "for piles and other painful swellings." [14] SC, Hr, Ln.

Muriatic Acid. *See* **Spirits of Sea Salt.**

Mustard (*Brassica nigra* (L.) Koch and *B. hirta* Moench); **Swine's Cress** (*Coronopus* sp.); **Wild Cress, Watercress** (*Nasturtium officinale*)
Seeds were used, both internally and externally, whenever it was thought neces-

sary "to warm and quicken the Spirits" (Cp). The manuscript receipts fit neatly into that tradition, using mustard seeds in poultices or plasters for palsy, fevers, sciatica, or pain in limbs; as a gargle for sore throat; and internally for rheumatism, dropsy, or urinary complaints. Al, Ln, SC, Sm, Mc, Pk, As. Various other members of the *Brassicaceae* were used similarly. Quincy wrote that the cresses "hath a sharp penetrating Taste, and [are] reckon'd very detersive. 'Tis therefore used in all chronical Diseases and particularly the Scurvy" (Q). Watercress juice alone or in combination with other herbs was recommended to cure "a deep consumption" (W). Al, Mc, Ru.

Myrrh (*Commiphora molmol* Engler)
A Middle Eastern gum, "It is of great use in Medicine; insomuch as to enter into Compositions almost of all Intentions" especially as a "great Cleanser and Strengthner of the Womb" (Q). Quincy further recommended myrrh as "an excellent Dentifrice; and keeps the Gums from waisting and stinking" (Q). Hr, Sm, PD, Vr.

Nettle (*Urtica dioica* L.)
Recommended by Culpeper as "a safe and sure medicine to open the pipes and passages of the lungs," nettles "eaten in the spring, consumeth the phlegmatic superfluities in the body of man, that the coldness and moistness of winter hath left behind" (Cp). External applications were esteemed throughout this period as beneficial for skin diseases and sores because fresh nettle leaves "stimulate, inflame, and raise blisters on the part of the skin which they touch. Hence, when a powerful rubefacient is required, stinging with nettles has been recommended" (B). Al, PD.

Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum* L.), Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara* L.)
Leaves were applied to sores caused by scurvy and other "obstinate cutaneous diseases" (B-mm). Although Quincy warned that the poisonous nightshades were unsafe and rarely used in 1736 (Q), Buchan's 1816 materia medica continued to suggest bittersweet for internal use (B-mm). Culpeper wrote enthusiastically of bittersweet, "It purgeth the body very gently, and not churlishly, as some hold. And when you find good by this, remember me" (Cp). Ru, Al. *See also* **Henbane, Jimsonweed.**

Niter Salt. *See* **Saltpeter.**

Nitric Acid. *See* **Spirits of Niter.**

Nutgall. *See* **Gall.**

Nutmeg, Mace (*Myristica fragrans* Houttuyn)

This "most delicate Aromatic Fruit," native to the East Indies and introduced into the West Indies, "enters into our Sauce as well as our Physic" (Q). Classified "a great Comforter of the Head and Stomach" (Q), nutmeg was included in receipts for rhubarb tincture, pomade divine, green ointment, and poultices as well as internal and external preparations for consumption, ague, dropsy, toothache, and lax. Hr, Sm, Al, Mc, Hr, PD. Mace, the nutmeg's netlike covering, was considered to have "much of the same Virtues" (Q). PD, Vr.

Oak (*Quercus* sp.)
The domestic uses of oak barks fit within the old herbal traditions. Culpeper noted, "The Leaves and Bark of the Oak, and the Acorn Cups, do bind and dry very much" (Cp). Cullen repeated this opinion: "This is the bark that is considered as the most powerful of the vegetable astringents; and its universal use and preference in the tanning of leather renders the opinion very probable" (Cn). Although Quincy discounted the medicinal value of oak bark in "Shop Compositions" (Q), home practitioners continued to use red, white, Spanish, and chestnut oak as Culpeper had approved for fluxes, to "breaketh the Stone in the Kidneys," and for "foul or spreading Scabs" such as cancers or yaws (Cp). Ln, Al, Tm, Pk.

Oil. *See* **Fat.**

Olibanum. *See* **Frankincense.**

Olive Oil. *See* **Sweet Oil.**

Onion (*Allium cepa* L.), Leek (*Allium ampeloprasum porrum* L.)
The onion was common in kitchen physic for chest complaints. It was "held by divers Country People a great Preservative against Infection, to eat Onions fasting with Bread and Salt" (Cp). Wesley's recommendations of onions for cancer, earache and "noise in the ears," and "a raging fit" of stone appeared among the manuscripts. Dd, Tm, Al, Ln, Cm. "Leeks are like them in Quality . . . although not so effectual" (Cp). Ml, Tm. *See also* **Garlic.**

Opium. *See* **Poppy.**

Orange (*Citrus sinensis* [L.] Osbeck or *C. aurantium* L.)
Used in bitters and in worm medicine. Sm, Cm, SC, Pk, Hr.

Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum* [Mill.] Nymann ex A.W. Hill)
Culpeper considered the parsley roots "to provoke Urine mightily" while the leaves "taketh away black and blue Marks coming of Bruises or Falls" (Cp). Quincy echoed the old herbal tradition: "This is sometimes used outwardly, by the common People, in Cataplasms, to discuss and resolve" and the roots were

used "for cleanising the Blood, as it is commonly call'd; and draining off ill Humours by Urine" (Q). The *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* warned against too much parsley (ED). Hr, Ln, PD, Tm.

Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa* L.)
"The Root is often used, but the Seed much more. The wild being better than the tame, shews Dame Nature to be the best Physician" (Cp). The parsnip is related to the carrot botanically, and both plants were similarly employed against kidney complaints and as poultices to relieve soreness, among other uses. Al.

Peach (*Prunus persica* [L.] Batsch)
Culpeper suggested the leaves and flowers to "gently open the Belly, and move it downward" (Cp). Quincy offered similar advice (Q). Peach blossoms were considered "a very palatable and gentle Medicine, for Children; provoking them to puke without any manifest Sickness. It also most commonly gives a Stool or two" (Q). The use of the roots for colic was apparently less typical. Peach kernel oil was reputed to alleviate pain when applied to the aggravated part. The old tradition was upheld in domestic manuscripts, with peach stones used for sore throat and pain in the side. Lenoir's poultice of peach leaves or bark applied to a white swelling reflected Culpeper's use of crumbled peach leaves on wounds. Al, PD, Ln, Hr.

Pearl Ash (potassium carbonate). *See* **Lye.**

Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium* L. or *Hedeoma pulegiodes* [L.] Pers)
Used in treating jaundice and to repel insects. Byrd wrote that ticks, chiggers, and horseflies "will attack no Part that is rubb'd with [pennyroyal]" or a decoction of the herb (Bd). Hr.

Pepper (*Piper nigrum* L. or *Capsicum annum* L.)
"our Country People have got a Trick of curing Agues with a large Dose of the same, taken just before the Fit comes: but they require good athletic Constitutions, who submit to be set on fire, to be cured of a contrary Extreme" (Q). Black pepper, white pepper, red or cayenne pepper, and long pepper were suggested for flux, yaws, mad dog bite, headache, hip pain, Guinea worm, kidney complaint, and toothache as well as for fevers and epidemics. Ln, Tm, Hr, Mc, PD, Vr. *See also* **Allspice.**

Peppermint. *See* **Mint.**

Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana* L.)
Lawson described the unripe persimmon as "the greatest Astringent I ever met withal, therefore very useful in some Cases." The ripe fruit "will presently cleanse a foul Wound,

but causes Pain." [15] The bark and root were the parts most used, internally for kidney problems and diarrhea, externally for cancer and old sores. Ln, Al, Pk.

Peruvian bark. *See* **Cinchona.**

Petroleum. *See* **British Oil.**

Pilewort, Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria* L. or perhaps an American *Ranunculus*)
"the roots consist of slender fibres, with some little tubercles among them, which are supposed to resemble the haemorrhoids; from thence it has been concluded, that this root must needs be of wonderful efficacy for the cure of that distemper" (ED). The Maclaine manuscript suggested this herb for scurvy rather than piles. The root of *Ranunculus bulbosus* L. "has frequently been used as a substitute for cantharides" (Br). Mc.

Pill Millipede, Pill Bug. *See* **Wood Louse.**

Pine (*Pinus* sp.)
"The Tops are detergent, vulnery, and diuretic" (Q). Pine bark, turpentine, rosin, and tar were used similarly to pine tops, administered internally and externally for a wide variety of ills and injuries. Turpentine is the crude exude collected from coniferous trees, especially from pines. Oil of turpentine (spirits of turpentine) and rosin are obtained by distilling turpentine. Pitch, resin, rosin, or pine gum was used for many of the same purposes as other pine products but especially as a ripener and drawer in salves and plasters and internally for respiratory complaints. Tar was considered a panacea. A North Carolina Moravian reported in 1754, "In the afternoon we brought in a wagon load of tar wood to burn tar water for Br. Kalberlahn's patients" (MR). Still in 1791, "Tar-water has lately been recommended to the world as a certain and safe medicine in almost all diseases" (ED), especially for respiratory complaints. Tar had dropped somewhat in esteem by the end of the eighteenth century. "Tar Water . . . This receipt is good. Put one Gallon of Cold Water upon one quart of Tar Stir it with a flat piece of Board *exactly* Six Minutes Cover it up close & let it stand three days & Nights then bottle for use make it in a glazed earthen Vessel" (PD). Ln, Cm, Al, PD, SC, Hr, Pk, Mc, Vr.

Pinkroot, Carolina Pinkroot, Indian Pink (*Spigelia marilandica* L.)
Also known in some "parts of Carolina . . . by the name of Snake-root" (ED). "This plant grows wild in the southern parts of North America. The roots are celebrated as an anthelmintic" (ED). Hr, William Alexander Memorandum Book, Ru.

Plantain, White, English, or Common (*Plantago major* L.); **Ribgrass** (*Plantago lanceolota* L.)
"reckon'd a great Cooler, and stopper of Fluxes . . . a great Healer of fresh Wounds. Some have had strange Notions of its resisting Poisons. . . . [A] Toad before she engages with a Spider, will fortify herself with some of this Plant; and . . . if she come off wounded, she cures herself afterwards with it" (Q). "The leaves bruised a little are the usual application of the common people to slight flesh wounds" (ED). Ln, Al, Hr, PD, Mc, Pk, Hr, Ru, Dd.

Pleurisy Root. *See* **Milkweed.**

Poke, Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana* L.)
"Many country people use the extract with great confidence in its efficacy in discussing indolent tumors, and in healing various kinds of ulcers" (B-mm). Ln, Cm.

Polypody (*Polypodium* sp.)
This genus of ferns includes the common polypody, or rock cap fern, and resurrection fern, "that from the Oak is reckon'd best" (Q). Often combined with purgatives, polypody was considered "proper in all Compositions which are intended to cleanse the Liver and other Viscera: and therefore it is order'd for these Purposes in many Decoctions, Diet-Drinks, and medicated Ales" (Q). Ln, Al.

Pomegranate (*Punica granatum* L.)
Fruit of a small tree native to the Mediterranean and Asia, introduced into tropical America. Its peel was "much order'd in Decoctions against . . . Fluxes" (Q). Sm.

Poplar, Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera* L.)
"The bark of the root has long been employed by medical men in the United States, as a tonic. . . . It is a strong bitter" (B-mm). This member of the magnolia family was commonly substituted for cinchona bark. Km, Ln. *See also* Bay; Cucumber Tree.

Poppy (*Papaver somniferum* L.)
"from which opium is made" (Ru). The flowers, "the common red that grows in the corn fields" (Pk), were used in home preparations such as colic water, although the seed capsules were preferred. Premiums were offered to encourage cultivation of the poppy in eighteenth-century America. "The best method of making Turkish Opium is said to be this—When the Poppy seed-pod is almost ripe, but still soft and full of sap, . . . incisions are made . . . drops of milky sap come out, and soon harden. . . . After all the Opium has been gathered it is worked and pounded on a board with a little water, and then it is shaped into cakes or rolls for sale" (Ru). Alternately, the sap was simply put in a shallow pan

in the sun, frequently stirred, and allowed to evaporate until of the proper consistency to form into pills or rolls. [16] Laudanum is a tincture of opium. Other opium preparations, such as elixir paregoric, Dover's powder, fever powders, and cough drops, were commonly available for purchase or were compounded at home. Pk, Mc, Hr, Ln, SC, Al, Ru, Vr.

Potash (potassium carbonate). *See* **Lye.**

Prickly Ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum* Mill., *Z clava-Herculis* L., or *Aralia spinosa* L.)
Lawson reported, "The Root of this Tree is Cathartick and Emetick, used in Cachexies."[17] Lenoir listed prickly ash for rheumatism. Ln.

Puccoon, Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis* L.)
"the Puckoon Root is called the Mercury root" (Ln) and was used similarly to mercury for venereal complaints and cancer. Bloodroot was also employed in the cure of pleurisy, tetter, and sore eyes and as emetic or snuff for polyps in the nose. Ln, Cm, Dd.

Puffball Fungus (*Lycoperdon* and *Calvatia* sp.)
To abate the bleeding of a wound, "take ripe puff balls, break them warily and save the powder: strew this on the wound and bind it on" (W). Ln, Tm.

Quicksilver. *See* **Mercury.**

Rattlesnake, Rattlesnake Root (*Prenanthes serpentaria* Pursh)
Byrd traveled with "3 Kinds of Rattle-Snake Root . . . in case of Need" (Bd). The tops were entered into a burn ointment. Al, Bd, Vr. *See also* **Seneca Snakeroot; Snakeroot.**

Rattleweed (*Cimicifuga racemosa* [L.] Nuttall, *Baptisia tinctoria* [L.] R. Brown, or others)
To treat dropsy, sore throat, and cachexy. Ln. *See also* **Black Snakeroot; Indigo**

Red Sage. *See* **Sage.**

Rhubarb (*Rheum officinale* Baillon or other sp.)
This Asian purgative root "is of great use in extemporaneous Prescriptions; and is also in many officinal Compositions" (Q). Newspapers and store inventories documented its availability throughout this period. Hr, Cm, Sm, Pk, PD, Rs, Bd, As, Vr.

Ribgrass. *See* **Plantain.**

Robin's Plantain, Robert's Plantain (*Erigeron pulchellus* Michaux)
The Moravian diaries recorded use of Robin's plantain, "the herb for poisons," against spider bite and snakebite (MR). "Robert's Plantain is the best Snakeroot. . . . The quickest and simplest use of it by men and cattle is to crush leaves and roots, shake it in water, and so take it, or eat it" (MR).

Rochelle Salts. *See* **Salts.**

Rose, Damask (*Rosa damascena* Mill.); **Red** (*Rosa gallica* L.); **Sweetbrier or Eglantine** (*Rosa eglanteria* L.) and Others (*Rosa* sp.)
Culpeper summed up the roses' medical reputation: "very great Use and Effect" (Cp). In five pages of recommendations, the herbalist covered all rose remedies encountered in the manuscripts. Flower petals (sometimes called *leaves* in early sources) of various *Rosa* species were considered effective both as a gentle purge and to stop a lax. Rose petals were common in gargles for sore throat and in pomade or bruise ointment to allay inflammations. Al, Hr, PD, SC, Rs, As. Roots of sweetbrier and wild upland rose were employed for consumption, kidney complaints, and flux. The domestic cures from the roots of the rose paralleled those involving another member of the rose family, the blackberry. Al, Ln. *See also* **Blackberry.**

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis* L.)
"The physical Use of it is very much both for inward and outward Diseases" (Cp), with special use in diseases of the head and brain. Hungary water is a distillate from rosemary flowers infused in brandy (Ru). Rosemary was included in ointments. Pinckney advised smoking rosemary in a pipe for rheumatism, following Culpeper's suggested practice for respiratory complaints. Pk, PD, Ru, Vr.

Rue (*Ruta graveolens* L.)
"resists all kinds of Poisons and Malignities, and is therefore to be used in Fevers" (Q), for worms, in external application for headache and in ointment. Sm, PD, Ln, As, Dd.

Saffron (*Crocus sativus* L.)
The yellow saffron is contained in the flower stigmas of a fall crocus. Saffron was generally imported from England, although a "wild saffron" was listed as growing in the medical garden in Bethabara, North Carolina. "Saffron is a very elegant and useful aromatic" (ED) and was included in several well-known preparations—bitters, Turlington's balsam, Daffy's elixir, and antibilious pills. Hr, PD, Pk, Ru, Vr.

Sage (*Salvia officinalis* L.), **Red Sage** (*Salvia coccinea*)
Sage was used to treat "foul Ulcers or Sores," to bathe inflamed parts, for a variety of internal purposes, and "to help the Memory" (Cp). PD, Ln, As.

Saint-John's-Wort, Saint-Andrew's-Cross (*Hypericum perforatum* L. and *H. hypericoides* [L.] Crantz)
Quincy (1736) included a long list of uses, as did the manuscripts, but by 1791 the *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* reported this herb absent from the official pharmacopoeia. *Hypericum* was included in Turlington's balsam and healing salve and was respected as a snakeroot. Hr, Mc, MR.

Sal Amarus. *See* **Salts.**

Sal Ammoniac. *See* **Ammonia, Ammonium Compounds.**

Salt (sodium chloride)
"This is a powerful medicine, . . . found adequate to the removal of every species of intestinal worm" (Cn). The use of salt in the ear for deafness was taken from Wesley, as was applying salt to the bite of a mad dog. Salt also entered domestic practice for snakebite and to ease dysentery. Ln, Al, Pk, PD, SC, Sm, Ml, MR, Dd. *See also* **Spirits of Sea Salt.**

Saltpeter, Niter (potassium nitrate)
Occurs naturally especially in certain soils and caves and in crevices of calcareous rocks. This chemical was also produced from mixtures of urine and dung, plant and animal material, and ashes. Quincy reported this salt "in much greater repute for medicinal Virtues abroad, particularly in Germany, than in England" (Q). In America, saltpeter found use in receipts for quinsy, fever, stone and gravel, and venereal complaints as well as in applications to various sores. PD, Mc, Ln, Sm, Hr, Al, Vr, As.

Salts.
Employed as cathartics: epsom salts, sal amarus (magnesium sulfate)— "The bitter purging salt" (ED) (Vr); magnesia alba (magnesium carbonate) (Hr, PD, Vr); Rochelle salts or Seignette salts (potassium sodium tartrate) (Vr); Glauber salts (sodium sulfate) (Al, Hr, Richard Green Waterhouse diary).

Sal Volatile Oeosum. *See* **Ammonia, Ammonium Compounds.**

Samson's (Sampson's) Snakeroot (*Psoralea psoralioides* [Walter] Cory, *Gentiana villosa* L. or G. *Caterbaei* Walter)
For intermitting fever. Hr. *See also* **Snakeroot.**

Sanicle. *See* **Black Snakeroot.**

Sarsaparilla (*Smilax glauca* Walter and other sp.)
China root, an Asian smilax, was esteemed in early medicine. Sarsaparilla root

from the West Indies was more readily available in America. A variety of native substitutes were gathered as well. "Sarsaparilla grows in rich land and Bottoms. . . . It is much used by the apothecary here as in Europe" (Ru). Similarly, Lenoir reported, "Chaney roots . . . said to grow in fields." Reuter suggested another smilax, greenbrier, to be laid on scorbutic sores (Ru). Among remedies for venereal disease, Buchan wrote, "one of the best we know yet is sarsaparilla" (B). Although Quincy expressed doubt as to its virtues, sarsaparilla was a common ingredient in "diet drinks" employed for a wide range of disorders, including venereal and cutaneous complaints. In Lenoir's kidney medicine, the "Sasaforela" may have served simply as a flavoring agent. Pk, Ln, Vr, Ru. *See also* Spikenard.

Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum* [Nuttall] Nees)
In the North Carolina backcountry, sassafras was "much used in medicine to purify the blood" (Ru). As early as the Roanoke settlement, sassafras was considered "to bee farre better and of more uses than the wood which is called Guaiacum, or Lignum Vitae." Sassafras root was commonly decocted into a tea. While traveling through the mid-Atlantic settlements, Kalm found that "some people peel the root and boil the peel with the beer which they may be brewing, because they believe it wholesome. The peel is put into brandy, either while it is distilling or after it is made" (Km). Miller suggested tea of roots and leaves for intermitting fevers while the flowers were "gathered and dried by the most curious, and are used for Tea." Kalm reported, "some years ago it had been customary in London, to drink a kind of tea of the flowers of sassafras, because it was looked upon as very healthful, but upon recollecting that the same potion was much used against the venereal disease, it was soon left off, lest those who used it should be looked upon as infected with that disease" (Km). [18] Among Southern sources, sassafras root bark was used against cachexy, cancer, dropsy, consumption, pleurisy, rheumatism, and kidney problems as well as in diet drinks. Ln, Al, Hr, Pk, Sm, Ru.

Saunders, Red (*Pterocarpus santalinus* L. India); **Yellow** (possibly yellow sandalwood, *Santalum album* L.). Vr, Pk.

Saxifrage (*Saxifraga* sp.)
"There are not many better Medicines to break the Stone than this" (Cp). Saxi-frage was known as stonebreaker for its habit of growing among stones, which may have suggested a signature of efficacy against kidney stones. The Allen manuscript spelling, *sasafrage,* raises an uncertainty whether the author meant sassafras or saxifrage. Either herb might have filled the role of kidney medicine. Al.

Scurvy Grass (*Cochlearia officinalis* L.)
Herb believed useful in preventing scurvy. Vr. *See also* **Horseradish.**

Sedum. *See* **Houseleek.**

Seignette Salts. *See* **Salts.**

Self-Heal. *See* **Heal-All.**

Seneca Snakeroot, Senega, Seneka (*Polygala senega* L.)
"It is the best Snakeroot, and the one most used by the apothecary, and therefore many hundreds of pounds are shipped away. Its effects as a purgative are most near to nature" (B-mm). During the 1730s seneca snakeroot gained great popularity not only as a specific for the cure of rattlesnake bite but also for fevers, rheumatism, dropsy, pleurisy, and croup. Tennent's "Essay on Pleurisy" was influential. [19] Seneca snakeroot was considered "a certain remedy for the cure of the croup" (Br). SC, Ru.

Senna (*Cassia angustifolia* Vahl or *C. acutifolia* Delile), **American Wild Senna** (*Cassia marilandica* L. or other sp.)
Senna leaves were "one of the most common Purgers in the Shops, and in extemporaneous Prescription" (Q). Bigelow reported that East Indian senna was common in America, although the native senna was cultivated and employed "where cheapness is an object . . . by families and country practitioners."[20] Hr, PD, Sm, Pk, Tm, SC, Vr. *See also* Cassia.

Shells (oyster, mussel, mollusk, snail, egg). *See* **Lime.**

Shoemake. *See* **Sumac.**

Slippery Elm. *See* **Elm, Slippery and Common.**

Snails
"These seem to be much more in use now [1736] than formerly. They abound in a slimy juice; and are experienced very good in Weaknesses, and Consumption" (Q). The multipurpose green ointment called for "black dew snails." One "Water against a Consumption" from Eliza Smith's *The Compleat Housewife* combined herbs and snails. Such snail waters, popular in the early eighteenth century, were a holdover from earlier times. PD. *See also* **Lime.**

Snake
Rattlesnake was "laid in water and the water drunk" for fevers (MR). All parts of the snake were esteemed in medicine—the skin for pain in limbs, the fat laid on snakebite, the fang to stick into an aching tooth. Ru, MR, Dd.

Snakeroot
"Practically all plants which the Indians are known to use as medicine are called 'Snakeroot'" (Ru). Several authors echoed Reuter's method for use: "If one is

bitten by a snake one chews out and swallows the sap, and lays the rest on the bite" (Ru). Although snakeroots were generally held in high esteem, Doddridge distrusted their efficacy: "They are not emetics, cathartics, or sudorifics. What then? They are harmless substances which do wonders in all those cases in which there is nothing to be done" (Dd). *See also* **Black Snakeroot; Fern; Heart Snakeroot; Ipecacuanha; Pinkroot; Rattlesnake Root; Robin's (Robert's) Plantain; Saint-John's-Wort; Samson's (Sampson's) Snakeroot; Seneca Snakeroot; Star Grass; Virginia Snakeroot.**

Soap Lees. *See* **Lye.**

Sow Bug, Sow's Louse. *See* **Wood Louse.**

Spanish flies. *See* **Cantharides.**

Spearmint. *See* **Mint.**

Spermaceti
A waxy substance from the head of a sperm whale. For a cough, "take one third of sparmecetie and two thirds of loafe Suger, mix it together in a stone morter, and take 5. or 6. teaspoons full in a day" (Sin). Vr.

Spikenard, Wild Sarsaparilla (*Aralia racemosa* L. or *A. nudicaulis* L.) *See* **Sarsaparilla.**

Spirits of Niter, Aqua Fortis, Nitric Acid
Quincy judged aqua fortis "too corrosive to be much used internally. . . . Its chief use is to dissolve Metals, and fit them for Preparations" (Q). Vr. Spirits of niter dulcified, or sweet spirits of niter, was an alcoholic solution of ethyl nitrite formed by reacting nitric acid and wine and then dissolving the product in brandy. For kidney stones the Allen manuscript repeated Buchan's advice that regular doses of sweet spirit of niter had been found "very efficacious in bringing away large quantities of earthy matter in flakes" (B). Its inclusion in neutral drops for a cold with fever was likely aimed at producing a sweat. Al, Vr.

Spirits of Sea Salt, Muriatic Acid, Marine Acid (hydrochloric acid).
Horry suggested spirit of marine salt to ease an ulcerated sore throat. Buchan, however, endorsed spirit or elixir of vitriol (sulfuric acid) for that purpose (B). Hr, Vr.

Spleenwort. *See* **Hartstongue.**

Spruce (*Picea rubens* Sargent), **Balsam Fir** (*Abies fraseri* [Pursh] Poiret or Euro-

pean *Abies* sp.) Used similarly to pine for respiratory complaints. Ln, PD. *See also* **Pine.**

Squill (*Urginea maritima* [L.] Baker or U. *scilla* Kunth)
From Mediterranean countries or from India. Two common preparations were syrup (squills, vinegar, sugar) and oxymel of squills (squills, vinegar, honey). The use of squill bulbs as emetics and diuretics for dropsy and respiratory disorders echoed common usage as Quincy outlined in 1736 (Q). Ln, Vr.

Star grass (*Aletris farinosa* L. or possibly *Hypoxis hirsuta* [L.] Coville)
"Grass Snakeroot is used to rub on snake-bite, and is one of the best" (Ru). Also recommended for cachexies, dropsies, and fevers. Ln, Hr, Bl, Bd, MR.

Storax, Styrax (*Liquidambar orientalis* Miller [oriental sweet gum] or *L. styraciflua* L. [American sweet gum])
Byrd wrote of sweet gum in treatment of urinary tract disorders and in external use, "as healing in its Virtue as Balm of Gilead, or the Balsams of Tolu and of Peru" (Bd). Storax resin was an ingredient in Turlington's balsam and pomade divine. It was considered very beneficial "in different cutaneous affections" (Br). Leaves and bark were employed against diarrhea. Hr, Pk, Ln. *See also* **Benzoin.**

Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana* Duchesne)
Leaves and roots were said to "cool the Liver and Blood, and Asswage all Inflammations in the Reins and Bladder" (Cp). Certainly this usage, among many others listed by Culpeper, qualifies strawberry leaves as a worthy ingredient for a "Drink for any Inward Weakness." By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, some dismissed the virtues of strawberry leaves as "too inconsiderable to be taken notice of anywhere" (Cn). Al.

Succory. *See* **Chicory.**

Sulfur. *See* **Brimstone.**

Sumac, Shoemake (*Rhus glabra* L. or other sp.)
This considerably astringent root bark was used for burns, sores, cancer, yaws, and worms. Ln, Al, Tm.

Sweet Gum. *See* **Storax.**

Sweet Oil, Olive Oil, Florence Oil
Involved in both internal and external preparations and in clysters, sweet oil was most commonly employed in liniments and salves. PD, SC, Tm, Hr, Al. *See also* **British Oil; Fat.**

Swine's Cress. *See* **Mustard.**

Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare* L.)
Tansy as bitters or for gout was typical advice from the 1791 *Edinburgh New Dispensatory* and Cullen (ED, Cn). The traditional usage for women's disorders and in pregnancy was not represented in manuscripts. For women wishing to become pregnant, Culpeper rated tansy "their best Companion, their Husband excepted" (Cp). External use for headache was unusual. Sm, PD, Pk, Hr, Ln.

Tar. *See* **Pine.**

Tartar, Cream of (potassium bitartrate)
Purgative. Al, PD, Hr, Tm, Richard Green Waterhouse Diary, Vr.

Tartar Emetic. *See* **Antimony.**

Tartar, Salt of (potassium carbonate). *See* **Lye.**

Thorn Apple. *See* **Jimsonweed.**

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris* L. or other sp.)
Among many uses that Culpeper suggested for thyme, the two found in southern manuscripts were prominent: (1) it "provokes the Terms, gives safe and speedy Delivery to Women in Travail, and brings away the Afterbirth"; and (2) "An Ointment made of it takes away hot Swellings and Warts" (Cp). PD, Ln.

Tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum* L.)
Most of the popular medical uses for tobacco discussed in period sources were illustrated in personal manuscripts. Tobacco was smoked, applied, and taken internally. It was specifically employed as protection against contagion, used in preservation of the teeth, applied to sores and inflammations, taken for worms, used to prevent and ease insect bites, and included in clysters for bowel disorders. Although not mentioned in manuscript sources, tobacco was also recommended as an emetic. Pk, Hr, Ln, MR, Km.

Tormentil. *See* **Cinquefoil.**

Touch-Me-Not, Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis* Meerb. or other sp.)
"for the Bite of a sneak take toutchmenot pound the herb and aply ti to the wound and take the juce inwardly." The origin of this curious remedy is uncertain. Al.

Tragacanth. *See* **Gum Dragon.**

Treacle. *See* **Molasses.**

Tree of Life. *See* **Guaiacum.**

Tulip Tree. *See* **Poplar.**

Turpentine. *See* **Pine.**

Tussick, Hog's Tusk, Boar Tusk Root (perhaps boar hog root, *Ligusticum canadense* [L.] Britton)
Quincy equated *Ligusticum* with *Levisticum,* or lovage. Use of lovage as a topical application for ripening seems closely related to use in cancer plasters. Ln, Cm.

Tutty. *See* **Zinc.**

Urine, Chamber Lye.
To moisten poultice on wound. Ln, Austin Family Memorandum Book.

Uva Ursi, Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* [L.] K. Spreng)
A member of the heath family. Cullen and other authors considered the leaves "to be of essential service in favoring the excretion of small calculi" (Cn). Al.

Valerian (*Valeriana* sp.)
Wesley recommended valerian root for "an uncommon oppression" (W). Vr.

Verdigris (various basic acetates of copper)
"a good Cleanser of sloughy and foul Ulcers. It also keeps down the proud Flesh" (Q). Among the manuscripts, verdigris was included in green salve, an eye water, and an ointment for ringworm. Al, Ln, Cm, Vr.

Veronica. *See* **Brooklime.**

Vervain (*Verbena hastata* L. or V. *officinalis* L.)
Culpeper considered verbena "cleansing and healing" (Cp), although Quincy regarded it as "little used inwardly" (Q). Al.

Vinegar
"It is an useful medicine both in inflammatory and putrid disorders. Its effects are, to cool the blood, quench thirst, counteract a tendency to putrefaction, and allay inordinate motions of the system. It likewise promotes the natural secretions, and in some cases excites a copious sweat. . . . Vinegar is not only an useful medicine, but serves likewise to extract, in tolerable perfection, the virtues of several other medicinal substances" (B). SC, Ln, Tm, Sm, Al, PD, Mc, As.

Violet (*Viola odorata* L. or other V. sp.)
Culpeper suggested the violet effectual in "all the Pains of the Back or Reins, and Bladder" among a multitude of uses for internal disorders (Cp). By the eighteenth century, violet syrup was not "so often prescribed as formerly" (Q). Violet retained a place in home remedies, however, "amongst the Nurses, it still remains [in 1736] in its wonted Esteem" (Q), especially as a gentle purge for children. The Allen manuscript followed Wesley in recommending the seed rather than the commonly used blossoms: "It both wastes the stone and brings it away" (Al).

Virginia Snakeroot (*Aristolochia serpentaria* L.)
"The present extemporaneous Practice . . . hardly ever omits it in most kinds of Fevers" (Q); however, serpentaria was considered "only safe when joined with the bark in use" (Cn). *See also* **Black Snakeroot; Heart Snakeroot; Snakeroot.**

Vitriol (sulfuric acid)

Salts of vitriol included sulfates of various metals. The vitriols were customarily included in applications for sores, cancers, and ringworm and as styptic to bleeding wounds. Less usual in manuscript sources were internal doses for venereal disease and as an emetic in throat sickness. Green vitriol, copperas, green copperas, sulfate of iron (ferrous sulfate): in internal use, "it killed the worms & saved the Child" (Ln). Mc, Ln, Cm, Dd, Vr. Blue vitriol, bluestone, blue copperas, Roman vitriol (cupric sulfate): "A Cure, if you are Stung, by anething" (Sm). Al, Ln, Mc, Tm, Hr, Cm, Sm, Vr, MR. White vitriol (zinc sulfate): "so very frequently applied to the eyes" (Cn). Ln, Tm, Hr, Vr. Elixir vitriol, aromatic sulfuric acid (sulfuric acid, alcohol, and aromatics such as ginger or cinnamon). Vr.

Walnut, White; Butternut (*Juglans cinerea* L. and perhaps *J. nigra* L.)
Quincy wrote, "These are much of the nature of Almonds; and good in all the same Intentions; but are not near so often prescribed" (Q). However, walnuts were more often prescribed in American domestic receipts. Walnut bark was considered "a pretty efficacious blister" especially to the bite of a snake and had "long been used as a purgative in the United States" (Br). Pk, PD, Dd.

Walnut Fern (perhaps rattlesnake fern, *Botrychium virginianum* [L.] Swartz, related to Adder's-tongue)
Doddridge recorded walnut fern for snakebite (Dd). "Fern Snakeroot . . . is the best Snakeroot," according to Reuter, and the "brown wool or hair from the stems" cooked in milk was considered helpful for easing dysentery (Ru).

Watercress. *See* **Mustard.**

Water Plantain. *See* **Alisma Plantago.**

Wild Cress. *See* **Mustard.**

Wild Ginger, Heart Leaf, Asarabacca (*Asarum canadense* L.)
Wild ginger, another birthwort, was included in ointments in three manuscript sources, but this use was not stressed in major publications of the period (although Gerard suggested it). [21] Lenoir listed heart leaf for cachexy and dropsy, similar to traditional uses for ginger. Ln, Hr, Ru, Bd, Vr.

Wild Indigo. *See* **Indigo.**

Wild Ipecac. *See* **Ipecacuanha.**

Wild Potato. *See* **Bindweed.**

Wild Sarsaparilla. *See* **Spikenard.**

Wine
"The effects of wine are, to raise the pulse, promote perspiration, warm the habit, and exhilarate the spirits. The red wines . . . strengthen the tone of the stomach and intestines. . . . The thin sharp wines . . . gently open the body. . . . All sweet wines . . . will heat the body more. . . . Wine is not only used as a medicine, but is also employed as a menstruum for extracting the virtues of other medicinal substances" of the vegetable, animal, and metallic kinds (B). Hr, Cm, PD, Sm, Ln, Pk, Mc, Al, SC, As.

Winter's Bark. *See* **Canella Alba.**

Wood Louse, Sow Bug, Sow's or Hog's Louse, Pill Millipede or Bug (Crustacea of the order Isopoda or Diplopoda of the order Glomerida)
Quincy extolled the virtues of wood lice "so much in the acquaintance of the common People" and "greatly in use amongst all Practical Authors" (Q) in both internal and external medicine for a wide assortment of complaints including "inveterate ulcers," similar to Horry's use of wood lice for an old sore. Salmon suggested that "applied alive, they help any swellings." Buchan, among other authors, recommended doses of wood lice in white wine for whooping cough (B). The pill millipede has been called "the primitive medicinal pill."[22] Hr.

Worms, Earthworms
Worm oil was used externally for weakness in "Foot, Ancles, or any part" or as a cure for worms. Earthworms were included along with snails and a bevy of herbal ingredients in such preparations as "Water against Consumption" (Q). By the end of the eighteenth century, such exotic waters seem to have fallen from common use. Hr, PD.

Wormseed. *See* **Jerusalem Oak.**

Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium* L.)
In great esteem as a bitters, wormwood was also thought "very serviceable to stimulate and discuss some particular Tumours" as well as "a Destroyer of Worms" (Q). Sin, Hr, Pk, Al, PD, Tm, Cm, Bl, As.

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* L.)
Considered a wound herb for "outward use in . . . all manner of Weaknesses" (Q). The domestic manuscripts echoed traditions directing yarrow to be taken for inward weakness, relieving "Haemorrhages, and Defluxions of all kinds; whether of the Nose, Womb, Bowels, fresh Wounds, Spitting of Blood, Vomiting, Diabetes, &c." (Q). Al, Ru, Pk, Hr, Tm.

Zinc; Calamine Stone (native zinc carbonate or silicate); **Lapis Calaminaris; Calamine, Prepared or Calcined; Tutty** (finely powdered impure zinc oxide); **Flowers of Zinc** (zinc oxide)
Used in preparations for the eye. Pk, Vr.

APPENDIX A—
WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Many domestic receipts gave rather inexact measurements; often neither the proportion of ingredients nor the dosage was noted. Common measurement required little equipment—a pinch or a pugil (a little handful, what can be grasped by two fingers and the thumb) was simple to gauge, as was a lump the bigness of a grain of corn, a nutmeg, or a chestnut. Estimating the quantity that would lie on a shilling or on the point of a knife was equally understandable.

Some domestic healers attached very precise measurements to their receipts, however, including Eliza Pinckney and Harriott Horry. Since cookery receipts often involved weights and measures similar to those used in medicine, a well-equipped kitchen was likely to have been outfitted with a balance for weighing along with vessels for measuring volume.

Troy Weight

A pound=12 ounces

An ounce=8 drachms

A drachm=3 scruples

A scruple=20 grains

Wine Gallon Measure

A gallon=8 pints

A pint=16 fluid ounces

A fluid ounce=8 fluid drachms

A fluid drachm=60 minims

A tablespoonful equaled about half a fluid ounce, or four fluid drachms, and a teaspoonful measured about one fluid drachm.

APPENDIX B—
CLASSES OF MEDICINAL PREPARATIONS:
(BASED ON WILLIAM BUCHAN'S DOMESTIC MEDICINE [1774])

Balsam.
Not only the natural balsams (plant resins, saps, gums), but "certain compositions, which, from their being supposed to possess balsamic qualities, generally go by that name."

Bolus.
Large pill "intended for immediate use. . . . They are generally composed of powders, with a proper quantity of syrup, conserve, or mucilage."

Cataplasm.
Poultice intended to heal or to draw out boils or other sores.

Clyster.
Rectal injection, enema. "Clysters serve not only to evacuate the contents of the belly, but also to convey very active medicines into the system."

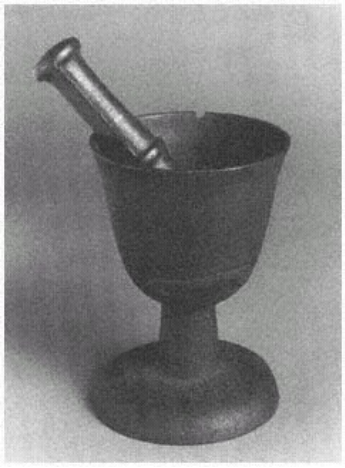
Collyria.
Eye water "for the cure of sore eyes."

Conserve.
Plant materials and sugar beaten together into a smooth mass. "They possess very few medicinal properties and may rather be classed among sweet-meats" except for limited use in forming medicinal powders into boluses or pills.

Decoction.
Plant material boiled in liquid, resulting in a stronger and more quickly prepared dose than that produced by infusion: "intended for immediate use."

Draught.
Simple solution of a medicine in water, ordinarily not heated. This method was used in preparing medicines "intended to operate immediately."

Electuary.
Medicinal powders "not ungrateful to the palate" were mixed with syrup, honey, or conserve to a consistency that "may neither separate by keeping, nor the mass prove too stiff for swallowing."



Cast Iron Mortar and Pestle. Nancy Ashworth (1745–1833), herb doctor, Buncombe County, North Carolina. Courtesy North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh.

Emulsion.
Insoluble substance suspended in water. "Thus camphor, triturated [ground thoroughly in a mortar] with almonds, readily unites with water into an emulsion."

Extract.
Prepared by boiling a substance in water, straining, and boiling again to reduce the volume and thus strengthen the preparation. Sometimes spirits took the place of the water in preparing an extract. "Extracts are prepared from a variety of different drugs, as the bark, gentian, jalap, &c."

Fomentation.
Decoction meant for external application.

Gargle.
Simple electuary, infusion, or decoction for cleansing the mouth and throat "peculiarly useful in fevers and sore throats."

Infusion.
Extraction of medicinal properties from plant material by steeping in hot or cold water or other liquid. Requires a longer time but is better than

decoction "since boiling is found to dissapate the finer parts of many bitter and aromatic substances."

Julep.
Mixture of common water, distilled spirituous water, and sugar "sharpened with vegetable or mineral acids, or impregnated with other medicines suitable to the intention."

Mixture.
May be composed of almost any ingredients, soluble or insoluble, stirred up in water or other liquid. "A mixture is seldom either an elegant or agreeable medicine. It is nevertheless necessary. Many persons can take a mixture who are not able to swallow a bolus or an electuary."

Ointment, Liniment, and Cerate.
Fat- or oil-based preparation that may be applied directly to a wound, sore, or inflammation or spread on a cloth to be used as a dressing: "ingredients of a more active nature can occasionally be added." Ointments and cerates customarily have wax added, making them thicker than liniments.

Pills.
"Medicines which operate in a small dose, and whose disagreeable taste, or smell, makes it necessary that they should be concealed from the palate, are most comodiously exhibited in this form." Some combination of syrup, soap, bread crumbs, and/or powdered licorice ordinarily formed the base or binder for the pills.

Plaster.
Waxy, oily, or gummy preparation spread on cloth or leather to be applied to the affected area of the body. "Such as are to be applied to the breasts or stomach ought to be soft and yielding; while those designed for the limbs should be firm and adhesive."

Powder.
Various ingredients pounded together and divided into doses. "The lighter powders may be mixed in any agreeable thin liquor, as tea or water-gruel. The more ponderous will require a more consistent vehicle, as syrup, jelly, or honey."

Sinapism.
Poultice "employed to recall the blood and spirits to a weak part," for example, a mustard plaster.

Syrup.
Originally considered medicinal, by the late eighteenth century syrups were "regarded chiefly as vehicles for medicines of greater efficacy, and are used for sweetening draughts, juleps, and mixtures; or for reducing the lighter powders into boluses, pills, and electuaries."

Tincture or Elixir.
Medicinal ingredients infused in alcohol. Considered a "use-

ful and elegant class of medicines, possessing many of the most essential virtues of simples, without being clogged with their inert or useless parts."

Vinegar.
Considered a useful medicine alone, but also "serves likewise to extract, in tolerable perfection, the virtues of several other medicinal substances," such as squills, garlic, and gum ammoniac. "Most of the odoriferous flowers impart to it their fragrance, together with a beautiful purplish or red colour."

Waters, Infused.
For example, limewater and tar water.

Waters, Distilled.
For example, Hungary water and cinnamon water. Formerly esteemed medicinally, by this period used chiefly as "vehicles for medicines of greater efficacy, or for rendering disgustful ones more agreeable to the palate and stomach." Simple distilled waters were nonalcoholic or low in alcohol, while spirituous distilled waters had higher alcoholic content.

Whey.
Formed by curdling milk with alum, mustard seed, or certain plants and then straining.

Wine.
Considered a fine medicine, "Indeed, to say the truth, it is worth all the rest put together." Also considered an excellent liquid for extracting medicinal virtues from other substances, serving the purpose of water, spirit, and vinegar because it possesses qualities of each.

APPENDIX C—
THE SOUTHERN FRONTIER AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the settlement front was pressing westward from the coastal regions to the fall line. Topography beyond that point made east-west travel difficult. The interior of the southern colonies was considered wilderness. Trade and exploration routes followed the valleys and river basins in a generally north-south direction. As populations increased and coastal areas became crowded, settlement spread south from Pennsylvania and north-west from Charleston. Settlers newly arrived from Europe ventured into the wilderness in their search for land and opportunity. During the third quarter of the eighteenth century, promising lands in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and the Carolina piedmont were settled by Ulster Scots and Germans (joined by a spattering of English, Welsh, Swiss, and French). By the time of the American Revolution, the backcountry had become rather heavily settled and the frontier was being pushed west into the Appalachian Mountains.

A cultural unity can be demonstrated throughout the backcountry—from the rural communities of Pennsylvania south through the interior regions of Virginia and the Carolinas into Georgia. The economy and social framework of the Carolina backcountry settlements centered on small farms and busy but modest commercial centers such as Salem and Salisbury, North Carolina, and Camden, South Carolina.

Trade and travel continued to follow the Great Wagon Road. Backcountry settlers maintained close contact with Pennsylvania and with the South Carolina Low Country. Lesser trade routes developed, connecting the interior settlements with North Carolina and Virginia ports. Exchange of ideas and information followed these routes, just as did the trade goods. This study illustrates the distribution of medical knowledge.

APPENDIX D—
A BLAZE OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE: THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

"They have lighted up a blaze of medical knowledge by which a few diseases have been nearly consumed."
David Ramsay, *"A Review of the Improvements, Progress and State of Medicine in the XVIIIth Century"*

The late eighteenth century may be looked on as the dawn of modern medicine. The application of the scientific method to the study of the healing arts produced a "blaze of medical knowledge." However, ancient healing practices persisted alongside advances.

Looking Backward

Primitive medicine evoked supernatural assistance. Personal charisma of the healer coupled with impressive, even outlandish rituals inspired confidence in the treatment and often hastened a spontaneous cure. Faith was, and perhaps still is, the paramount ingredient in many cures—faith in the medical practitioner, faith in the treatment, faith in a higher power. In reality, the great majority of illnesses pass, whether treated or not.

Beginning with Hippocrates

The separation of medicine from theology and philosophy began in ancient Greece. Hippocrates (fifth century B.C.) refuted the supernatural origins of illness, stressing instead natural causes. His skills in observation and prognosis served as a model for physicians through the ages. Another Greek physician, Galen (who practiced in Rome in the second century A.D.) was largely responsible for continuing adherence to the principles of Hippocrates. The lasting influence of Hippocrates and Galen was reflected in the long reign of the humoral theory.

The Humoral Theory: Bleed, Sweat, Purge, and Vomit

When diseased, the body was thought to have developed an imbalance in the four elements—air, water, fire, and earth—as indicated by the body's becoming

too dry, moist, hot, or cold respectively. Such symptoms were considered signs of imbalance in the humors, the natural fluids of the body. The humors—sanguine (blood), phlegmatic (phlegm), choleric (yellow bile), and melancholic (black bile)—were considered seated in the heart, brain, liver, and spleen. Galen's ideas of restoring health by bringing the four humors into balance may be recognized in the "bleed, sweat, vomit, and purge" methods popular in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century medicine. Adherence to the humoral theory can be traced from Hippocrates and Galen through Thomas Sydenham, Hermann Boerhaave, and William Cullen to most eighteenth-century American practitioners.

Thomas Sydenham (who practiced in England in the mid-seventeenth century) built on the firm foundation for modern medicine laid down by Hippocrates and Galen. Sydenham looked to nature for causes and cures of disease. His basic methods included observations of the patient, the symptoms, and the patterns related to spread of diseases. Boerhaave (Holland, early eighteenth century) followed in Sydenham's footsteps, teaching his methods in a clinical setting. These two European physicians shoved aside much of the philosophy and theology that had crept back into medical theories since the time of Hippocrates.

Sydenham and Boerhaave and their disciple, William Cullen (Scotland, mid-eighteenth century), served as models to eighteenth-century physicians in America as well as in Europe. Benjamin Rush (Pennsylvania, late eighteenth century) was considered the American Boerhaave as he carried the humoral theory to new extremes in both teaching and clinical work.

Although old traditions continued full blown, important new advancements occurred. In mid-eighteenth-century Britain, John Hunter raised surgery from a mechanical skill to a science. He epitomized the scientific awakening of the age as he challenged his students and colleagues, "why think, why not try an experiment?" The scientific method was thus established, and the Age of Enlightenment was in full swing. [1]

The Age of Enlightenment

The eighteenth century, the Age of Enlightenment or Age of Reason, was so called because of an intellectual revolution that touched most disciplines. Observation and measurement of the world led to the development of the basic laws of physics. Isaac Newton explained motion in three simple laws, while Benjamin Franklin proved that lightning is nothing more than electricity flowing like a fluid. Chemistry and astronomy yielded also to organization into formulas. However, attempts to apply the laws of nature to religion and politics met with less success.

The human body proved much too complex to be described by a simple set of definitions or formulas, although the cleverest physicians of the time attempted to do so. And those disciples of Hippocrates who followed Hunter's questioning approach originated important medical advances.

From an Eighteenth-Century Perspective

Since yesterday's medical theories are today's folklore, no more words will be wasted in outlining the modern perspective. It will be more effective to investigate a period viewpoint of the triumphs, challenges, and failures of medicine. To view medical history from the perspective of the eighteenth century, it is enlightening to read the words of Dr. David Ramsay, a renowned Charleston physician. His January 1, 1800, review of the previous century, read before the South Carolina Medical Society, combined thorough knowledge of European precedents with up-to-date developments in medicine. Although this is the view-point of a professional practitioner, Ramsay was obviously aware of extensive home practice of physic (medicine) in towns as well as in the interior settlements. Sometimes naive, sometimes profound, Ramsay's writings convey tremendous insight into the successes and the shortcomings of early American medicine. Ramsay thus sets the stage for this investigation of southern medical practice. Ramsay's words convey most effectively the attitudes, knowledge, and misconceptions of the period.

> Within the last hundred years, thousands of human bodies have been dissected, and every part minutely examined, and its functions, uses, connexions, and relations, accurately ascertained. . . . This increase of anatomical knowledge, has produced the most beneficial consequences. . . . The art of surgery has been particularly indebted to it. . . .
>
> The double incision in amputations—the present mode of removing cancerous breasts, and encysted tumours—the lateral operation for the stone in the bladder—the use of the cutting gorget—amputation in the joint of the shoulder, and the superior neatness, ease, and expedition of the present surgery, reflect great honor on the 18th century. . . .
>
> [Midwifery was brought] to such a degree of perfection, that farther improvements, are scarcely to be expected. . . .
>
> A volume would hardly be sufficient to detail the improvements that have taken place in the theory and practice of physic within the last hundred years. Physicians, who were ignorant of the circulation of the blood, were incompetent to reason on the animal functions. . . . No one knew how our food passes into the blood, whether it went there or not, or what became of it. Since these new lights shone upon us, a new era commenced in medicine. Reasoning and observation have gone hand in hand, and reciprocally corrected each other, till a consistent system, both of physiology and pathology, has been introduced. . . .
>
> An infinity of experiments have been made within the last fifty years for medical purposes. . . . The virtues and powers of medicines have been ascertained; and all has tended to enlighten physicians in the god-

like work of alleviating human misery. . . . The cool regimen in fevers, was introduced. . . . The materia medica has been eminently improved in the 18th century. The uses of old medicines have been extended. New ones have been introduced . . . and prescriptions simplified.

Without peruvian bark, tartar emetic, and glaubers' salts, poor would be our means for combating the endemical diseases of our country; yet these three valuable medicines were very little known, and less used, . . . one hundred years ago. Opium has been used to alleviate pain since the days of Homer. . . . The liquid laudanum of Sydenham . . . is now so frequently used . . . as to be generally found in decent families for domestic prescription. . . . Time would fail in dwelling particularly on the benefits derived from Seneca snakeroot, magnesia, castor oil, quassia, simarouba, angustura bark [three tropical American bitter barks or woods], and a variety of other medicines, which have been either first introduced, or introduced into general practice in the 18th century. . . .

Our illustrious countryman, Dr. Franklin, by a strong effort of genius, and hazardous but decisive experiments, . . . enlarged the resources of physicians, for electricity in their hands has been found serviceable in various diseases. . . .

[A] handsome beginning . . . towards an American materia medica [gives] us ground to hope, that at no very distant day, remedies for our endemical diseases will be found in our own country. . . . Botany is intimately connected with medicine, and the great improvements lately made in one, have reflected light on the other. . . .

The art of preserving and restoring health is no longer . . . inaccessible to all who are not adepts in the Latin and Greek languages. It has been explained in our mother tongue, and stripped of the terms of art. This diffusion of medical knowledge, among the common people by . . . popular writers, may have encouraged some adventurous persons to go beyond their depth; but the good resulting from it has far over-balanced the evil. . . . the common people have been accustomed to think and reason on medical subjects. . . .

It is within the recollection of many, that about forty years ago, when the first general inoculation took place in Charleston, there was a scene of the deepest distress. . . . the practice of inoculation, is of late so much improved, and simplified, that persons without medical education, now undertake it with more ease and safety, than the ablest practitioners did forty or fifty years ago. The dangers from inoculated small pox are now comparatively slight. Even these are in a fair way of being rendered more so by substituting in their place a new disease called the cow-pox. . . .

Our profession, in the 18th century, had triumphed as much over the

> scurvy, as over the small pox. . . . The judicious use of wort, or beer, of sour krout, of acids, particularly of lemon juice, together with attention to diet, to climate, to cleanliness, and purification of the air have, under the divine favor, been instrumental in preserving the lives of many thousands within the last 40 years. . . .
>
> Physicians, by writing in a popular style, and in the English language (both of which began to be fashionable in the eighteenth century) have enlightened their fellow-men on the subject of cleanliness, on the necessity of pure water, of wholesome air, and free ventilation. . . . They have taught them the advantages of temperance, activity, and well governed passions. . . .
>
> Much of the health of mankind depends on what they eat and drink. . . . Physicians have recommended the free use of greens, and other vegetables. . . . Over and above its own salutary qualities [sugar] has promoted the health of the human race. . . .
>
> Who can tell the extent of the benefits that have resulted from the pointed recommendation of medical men in favor of cleanliness? . . . The writings of [William Buchan] have, within the last forty years, been read by thousands, and enlightened them in the great art of preserving health. . . .
>
> [The physicians of the 18th century] have lighted up a blaze of medical knowledge by which a few diseases have been nearly consumed; some destroyed in their embryo state; others entirely prevented; and all, more or less, mitigated. . . . In support of this assertion, I observe, that the plague, pestilential fevers, putrid scurvies and dysenteries, have much abated in the 18th century. . . . The yellow fever, which for eight years past, has infested our seacoast towns, has given birth to much medical discussion. . . . In the medical history of South-Carolina, the yellow fever and small-pox have been the most injurious epidemics. . . .
>
> While we bid adieu to the 18th century, we cannot but recollect its many triumphs. . . . In it every branch of medical knowledge has been carried to an amazing extent. . . . The plan of improving our profession, by observation and induction, which has rendered the names of Hippocrates and Sydenham so famous in medical history, is as open to us, as it was to them. [2]

While medical understanding advanced, the eighteenth-century materia medica differed little from the list of medicines popular in Europe during the Middle Ages. Such outlandish ingredients as powdered human skull and dried dung remained in the healer's bag of tricks. However, newly discovered American botanicals comprised important seventeenth- and eighteenth-century additions to European herbals. Simple herbal medicines thought to restore the proper balance of fluids in the body were known as Galenicals, named for the early Greek healer.

Eighteenth-century practitioners commonly prescribed simple medicines, combining few ingredients compared to the complex formulas generally popular earlier. (Complicated formulas regained favor during the nineteenth century.) Some practitioners continued the ancient practice of seeking a sign or signature to indicate efficacy of a plant for medicine.

The Doctrine of Signatures: For Each Cure, a Sign

The belief that nature provides a cure for every disease and that the cure may be recognized by a sign or signature led to the selection of a plant with kidney-shaped seeds for kidney problems, snakelike roots to treat snakebite, and red decoctions to mitigate menstrual complaints. The Doctrine of Signatures can be recognized in medical traditions from many cultures. This straightforward method for seeking a cure seems to have been practiced by Europeans and by Native Americans even before contact between the two cultures. Although unfounded in fact, plant signatures remain a fascinating area of botanical folklore. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, the scientific method offered a system for identifying beneficial herbs through observation and experiment. Ramsay forecast the continuing interest in botanical exploration and medical investigation that marked the nineteenth century and accelerated during the twentieth.

> Our climate is too warm for anatomical pursuits, but its natural history is yet unexplored, and presents an ample field for investigation. The studies of botany and chemistry are particularly useful in our new country. . . .
>
> I know, but one native tree, and only four native plants, the virtues of which have been thoroughly investigated in the United States. I mean the persimon tree . . . the phytolacca, or poke. . . . the stramonium, or James-town [Jimson] weed, . . . sumach, . . . and tobacco. . . . Nothing grows in vain; but we have yet found out the uses of only a small part. No disease is incurable, though there are several which physicians have been hitherto unable to cure. [3]

Samuel Thomson's *New Guide to Health; or, Botanic Family Physician,* published in 1822, illustrated the continuing interest in botanical medicine that Ramsay predicted. Thomson's guide rapidly became the manual for a new class of American practitioners, both professional and self-proclaimed. Thomson insisted exclusively on the use of vegetable remedies.

At the same time in Europe, Samuel Hahnemann's homeopathy was gaining popularity. Homeopathic treatment dictated minute doses of drugs selected to produce symptoms similar to those of the ailment. While Thomsonian medicine was immensely popular, homeopathy failed to attract a wide following in the South.[4]

Both Thomsonianism and homeopathy arose out of eighteenth-century excesses. The excessive use of calomel and of bloodletting were particular abuses

against which nineteenth-century medical theorists rebelled. In spite of alternative methods proposed by Thomson, Hahnemann, and others, the heroic treatments (bleeding, sweating, vomiting, and purging) remained in the mainstream of traditional medical practice for decades to come.

The benefits from applying the scientific method to the study of medicine were not immediately realized but have been cumulative. Observations of the patient and recognition of specific symptoms now seem basic in the diagnosis and management of disease, but to eighteenth-century physicians, this approach was both novel and innovative. Several monumental advances did, however, improve the prospects for the life and health of the common people two centuries ago. Smallpox and scurvy constituted two major conquests of eighteenth-century medicine in that "blaze of medical knowledge by which a few diseases have been nearly consumed."

APPENDIX E—
THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTITIONER: PHYSICIAN, SURGEON, PREACHER, OR QUACK

"the practice of physic is free to every man or woman who chooses to undertake it."
David Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*

Distinctions among classes of medical professionals dulled in America. In Europe, physicians were traditionally medical philosophers, while surgeons and apothecaries performed medical tasks. By the end of the eighteenth century, surgeons' prestige nearly equaled that of physicians, and American practitioners often found themselves called on to fill three roles—diagnostician, surgeon, and pharmacist. The title *physician* will be used here to designate professional practitioners, whether formally trained or self-proclaimed.

Physicians' training ran the gamut from a university education to an informally acquired introduction to the healing arts. Self-taught doctors were common, as were those who had apprenticed under physicians, surgeons, or apothecaries. In truth, there was such a small body of medical understanding that any educated person could, by reading several books, gain a fair grasp of the subject.

The first fully trained physicians in the New World were educated in European universities. As the eighteenth century wore on, young Americans seeking a medical education were likely to pursue their studies in Edinburgh or, increasingly, in Philadelphia. By 1808, "The study of medicine becomes daily more fashionable, and the first people in [South Carolina] now educate their sons for physicians." During the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century, doctors were concentrated in towns along the coast. Toward the close of the century, as physicians became plentiful in the eastern cities, some set up practices in the then-populous inland sectors. [1]

University-trained physicians were men of letters and of position, typically scholars in fields outside medicine—scientists, writers, artists, or musicians. They were unlikely to move into the wilderness to set up practices on the frontier, although travel through the American interior was a popular pursuit for gentleman scholars who possessed a spirit of adventure. The usual goal of such expedi-

tions was to produce an exotic account for readers back in Europe and to collect biological specimens, artifacts, or other curiosities. Many explorers concentrated their energies toward studying the flora and fauna or the native peoples encountered. The introduction of American plants into British and continental gardens led to inclusion of these botanicals in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century herbals and medical guides. Intellectually curious physicians who studied natural history attempted to relate their findings to disease and healing, expanding the general understanding of environmental influences on health.

Both Dr. Alexander Garden (Charleston, mid-eighteenth century) and Dr. Charles Drayton (Charleston, late eighteenth century) typified the dilettante physician/scientist. Garden not only devoted much energy to the study of botany but also communicated his findings and questions to colleagues in Europe. Garden and his work were widely known, as evidenced by the famed Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus naming the gardenia for this Scots gentleman. As a loyalist, Garden was forced to leave Charleston at the end of the American Revolution and return to Britain to set up a practice in London. Drayton, another Low Country gentleman, was educated at the University of Edinburgh and divided his energies among botany, painting, and developing the extensive gardens at Drayton Hall. Although limited, Drayton's medical practice was taken quite seriously. Active in social, political, and professional affairs, Dr. David Ramsay (Charleston, late eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries) was less the gentleman scientist and more the thoroughly professional practitioner. He was born and educated in Pennsylvania.

Professional practitioners were slow to settle in the backcountry. The few physicians who did venture to the frontier were deluged with patients. Early Americans were accustomed to treating their own disorders; however, "In uncommon or complicated cases" they were advised "to apply to a Physician that fears God." Norwegian surgeon Hans Martin Kalberlahn filled that niche in piedmont North Carolina during the initial wave of settlement in the mid-eighteenth century. Immediately upon arriving in North Carolina with the original party of Moravian settlers in 1758, Kalberlahn was called on to bleed a neighbor and administer medicine, services for which he received the welcome payment of two bushels of corn. Several weeks later "an Irishman arrived, seeking council," and the Moravian townspeople felt they "could not refuse, as the poor man was in great pain, although . . . not convenient for us with our small resources." After five days this patient was enough improved to travel the eighty miles to his home on the Catawba River, but on that same evening another Irishman (perhaps Scots-Irish) arrived from the Dan River to have teeth pulled. And in 1761 the demand for professional medical attention had not slackened: "A man came all the way from Savannah River to get medicine; others came from Virginia to see the doctor" (Dr. August Schubert, Kalberlahn's successor in the Moravian settlement). [2]

By the turn of the century the backcountry settlements also claimed a class of physicians-gentleman scholars. Calvin Jones (North Carolina backcountry, late

eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries) managed a political career and served as editor of a newspaper while pursuing an active medical practice. Jones championed the cowpox vaccination against smallpox while finding time and energy to develop new techniques for eye surgery.

Lacking trained physicians, the poor and the uneducated looked to the lettered and influential for medical treatment. Spiritual, military, and political leaders had been respected as healers throughout the history of medicine, and the Age of Enlightenment offered no exception. These casual practitioners might have had access to a volume on surgery or anatomy, a philosophical work on medicine, a medical dictionary, a materia medica, or one of the popular dispensatories in addition to herbals and general medical guides. Many personal libraries contained such volumes. Of course, the depth of medical knowledge and the level of interest in aiding those in need varied greatly among preachers, generals, judges, and other leaders.

An Anglican clergyman, Charles Woodmason, traveling the backcountry on a preaching mission in 1775 recorded in his journal, "Many Applications made to me for Advice in the Physical Way—But for want of Medicines could give no Assistance to the Poor People." Another minister, John Wesley, famed reformer and founder of the Methodist Church, wrote a little home health book that circulated widely on the American frontier. Wesley recommended turning to a reputable physician for the most serious illnesses. However, he published *Primitive Physick* "to rescue men from the jaws of destruction . . . through the ignorance or dishonor of physicians." [3]

There continued to be a paucity of medical help available on the frontier throughout the period. Reminiscing about the early settlement days in Virginia and Pennsylvania, Joseph Doddridge said, "For many years in succession there was no person who bore even the name of a doctor within a considerable distance . . . [and] many . . . people perished for want of medical skill and attention."[4]

Some doctors sought to build their reputations on the unusual or exotic. In a letter to Jones, James Bogle of Louisburg, North Carolina, wrote excitedly of his plans for entering medical practice. "I long to be . . . opening veins and cutting off legs and arms." He continued with a description of the virtues of an "electrical machine" he hoped to use in his practice.[5]

An intriguing advertisement in the March 7, 1743, *South-Carolina Gazette* provides a window on another class of practitioner—neither physician nor domestic healer. Certain "Dutch Ladies" in Charleston announced "Choice Cures for the Flux, Fevers, Worms, bad Stomach, Pains in the Head, and most other diseases incident to this Country." These women claimed, "Secrets never yet discovered to any but the Descendants of a learned and experienced Professor of Physick lately deceased."

Newspapers and journals provide evidence of other alternative health-care providers. An up-country South Carolinian complained that there was "no doctor to be had except a Dutch quack, who used simples altogether"; however, at that time,

quack was not an altogether derogatory label but simply indicated those healers with little formal training. Some were indeed scoundrels, but other so-called quacks were skilled, sincere, and unselfish in attempts to aid their sick neighbors. [6]

Many men and women practiced healing as a sideline to supplement their incomes and perhaps as a service to their neighbors or to the poor. Charles Harris, a student at the new University of North Carolina, wrote home to Cabarrus County in 1795 of his plans to "keep a small apartment of Medicine for the accommodation of students & the neighborhood . . . until some physician shall think it worth his while to settle near us." This decision was prompted by the fact that students from the eastern counties were "frequently attacked with returns of their Disorders [probably malaria] & have suffered for the want of medicine."[7] There was a modest income to be derived from the healing arts, but, as with any business, a few scoundrels sought to take advantage of the opportunity.

A mid-century almanac author quipped, "Now the physician's harvest comes in, to give men's purses a purge." Francis Asbury, preaching on the frontier, bemoaned, "How do unskilled surgeons often put their patients to pain without profit [to the patient]." Service to the common people was one of John Tennent's principles in compiling *Every Man His Own Doctor*. He complained, "Doctors are commonly so exorbitant in their Fees, whether they kill or cure." Tennent went on to reassure his readers that "if I happen not to cure my Patient, I am sure I shan't ruin him. And surely, no Man can say, he dies very unfairly, when there is so little to pay."[8]

The training and the reputation of medical practitioners in general varied greatly from individual to individual and from area to area. The title *doctor* was rather carelessly applied in the colonies throughout the period. Practitioners called for "some mark of distinction between the enlightened physician and the ignorant empiric." Most doctors fit somewhere between these two extremes.[9]

NOTES

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3. George Hume to Ninian Home, *William and Mary Quarterly* 6 (April 1949): 253;

William S. Powell, "Tryon's 'Book' on North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 34 (July 1957): 412–13.

4. Fries, ed., *Records,* 1:280, 398, 4:1563.

5. Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 24–25.

6. See the arguments posed in favor of cowpox vaccination and opposed to smallpox inoculation by Charleston physicians led by Dr. David Ramsay in *The Palladium of Knowledge; or, The Carolina and Georgia Almanac for the Year of Our Lord 1803* (Charleston, 1803).

7. Fries, ed., *Records,* 1:375, 398, 123, 4:2197, 1:280, 296.

8. "Journal of Doctor Thomas Walker, 1749–1750," in Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746–1786* (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1979), 801; William Byrd, *Histories of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina,* ed. William K. Boyd (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1984), 65, 68.

9. Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 7.

Chapter 4—
General Therapies

1. Thomas Ewell, *Letters to Ladies, Detailing Important Information Concerning Themselves and Infants* (Philadelphia, 1817), 32.

2. Ramsay, *History,* 66.

3. Asbury, *Journal and Letters,* 1:394.

4. Letters dated February 2 and 23, 1812, Benejah Nicholls Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

5. Fries, ed., *Records,* 4:1552.

6. Ibid., 1:186.

7. Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania from 1763 to 1783, Inclusive Together with a Review of the State of Society and Manners of the First Settlers of the Western Country,* 2d ed. (1824, 1876; Pittsburgh: John S. Ritenour and Wm. T. Lindsey, 1912), 119.

8. Ralph Emmett Fall, ed., *The Diary of Robert Rose: A View of Virginia by a Scottish Colonial Parson 1746–1751* (Vienna, Va.: McClure Press, 1977), 44; William Alexander Memorandum Book, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

9. Alexander Thomson, *The Family Physician; or, Domestic Medical Friend* (New York, 1802), 317–18.

10. Cameron Family Papers, vol. 1, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

11. Carl Hoffman, "First Medical Practitioners in Gaston County, North Carolina," *Gaston County Historical Bulletin* 12 (1966): 1–3.

12. William Buchan, *Domestic Medicine; or, A Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases by Regimen and Simple Medicines,* 3d ed. (London, 1774), 619–23.

13. *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1771), 3:641–43.

14. Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 14; James Potter Collins, *Autobiography of a Revolutionary Soldier,* ed. John M. Roberts (1859; New York: Arno Press, 1979, 77; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 622.

15. Fries, ed., *Records,* 3:1068; Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 18.

16. *Raleigh Register and North Carolina Weekly Advertiser,* January 7, 14, 1800.

17. *Raleigh Register,* February 25, 1800.

18. Richard Green Waterhouse diary (typescript, p. 194), Special Collections Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

19. Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:522.

20. Mabel L. Webber, ed., "Extracts from Journal of Mrs. Ann Manigault," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 21 (1920): 16.

21. *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 3:65.

22. James Willson to brother Samuel, May 7, 1789, Leonidas Chalmers Glenn Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

23. In those days before standardized spelling, *ipecacaunha* was often abbreviated as *hippo* or *ippo* rather than *ipecac*. As John Quincy put it, "This is very differently called and spelt by different Authorsv (*Pharmacopoeia Officinalis and Extemporanea; or, A Complete English Dispensatory, in Four Parts* [London, 1736], 182). Ipecacaunha was also known as Brazil root. Doddridge, *Notes,* 116.

24. Doddridge, *Notes,* 116; Fries, ed., *Records,* 4:1552; John Wesley, *Primitive Remedies* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Woodbridge Press, 1975), 21.

25. A. R. Newsome, ed., "Twelve North Carolina Counties in 1810–1811: Moore County," *North Carolina Historical Review* 6 (July 1929): 292.

26. Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:568.

27. Doddridge, *Notes,* 116; Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:572.

28. James W. Mahoney, *The Cherokee Physician; or, Indian Guide to Health* (Ashville, N.C., 1849), 302.

29. Asbury, *Journal and Letters,* 1:768, 104.

30. "Virginia in 1732: The Travel Journal of William Hugh Grove," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 85 (January 1977): 40; John C. Gunn, *Gunn's Domestic Medicine; or, Poor Man's Friend,* ed. Charles E. Rosenberg (1830; Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 281.

31. Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:832; Collins, *Autobiography,* 123.

32. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 731.

33. Ibid., 411.

34. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 114; Asbury, *Journal and Letters,* 1:611.

35. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 19.

36. Asbury, *Journal and Letters,* 1:715.

37. William Buchan, *Every Man His Own Doctor; or, A Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases, by Regimen and Simple Medicines. To Which is Added a Treatise on the Materia Medica* (New Haven, Conn., 1816), includes *Compleat Family Directory,* 127, 128, 130.

38. Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1796; Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1971), 268.

39. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 20.

40. *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 2:485; Carl J. Pfeiffer, *The Art and Practice of Western Medicine in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1985), 26–32.

41. James Bogle to Calvin Jones, July 13, 1810, Jones Papers; James Kershaw Papers, Caroliniana Collection, University of South Carolina, Columbia; Vierling inventories, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

42. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 18, 139–40.

43. Jacques M. Quen, "Elisha Perkins, Physician, Nostrum-Vendor, or Charlatan?" *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 37 (1963): 159–66.

44. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 119; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 391.

45. Samuel Stearns, *The American Oracle* (New York, 1791), 143.

46. Asbury, *Journal and Letters,* 1:360; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 93, 141.

47. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 21, 138, 141–42.

48. Alexander Thomson, *Family Physician,* 363.

49. "Journal of Doctor Thomas Walker, 1749–1750"; Fries, ed., *Records,* 6:2701.

50. Walter Clark, ed., *The State Records of North Carolina* (Winston: M. I. and J. C. Stewart, Printers to the State, 1895), 12:794–95, 800–801, 855, 867.

51. Fries, ed., *Records,* 5:2298, 2306, 2340, 6:2473, 2492, 2562.

52. J. Hooker to Edward Hooker, October 1, 1812, Edward Hooker Letters and Papers, Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

53. Edward Hooker to Noadiah Hooker, September 8, 1807, Hooker Letters and Papers.

54. Robert Wilson to Rev. Samuel Wilson, March 27, 1798, Glenn Papers; Collins, *Autobiography,* 146.

55. Thomas Ewell, *Letters to Ladies,* 37–38.

56. For more, see Carl Bridenbaugh, "Baths and Watering Places of Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 3d ser., 3 (April 1946): 151–81.

Chapter 5—
Patent Medicines and Famous Nostrums

1. Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:575, 585.

2. Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia,* 214; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 8; Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 68; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 737–39.

3. Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia,* 318–24.

4. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 739.

5. Cameron Family Papers, folder 3504; *Edinburgh New Dispensatory,* 3d ed. (Edinburgh, 1791), 559.

6. James Harvey Young, *The Toadstool Millionaires: A Social History of Patent Medicines in America before Federal Regulation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 10–15.

7. Ibid.

8. Virginia manuscript receipt book, 1744, Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem, N.C.; Glasse, *Art of Cookery,* 386; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 135; Nicholas Culpeper, *The English Physician Enlarged with Three Hundred and Sixty-Nine Medicines Made of English Herbs* (London, 1770), 220; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia,* 308–9; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 697.

9. Culpeper, *English Physician,* 220; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 134–35; *Edinburgh New Dispensatory,* 282, 529; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia,* 188, 420.

10. Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:575.

11. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 135; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 727; Byrd, *Histories,* 243; Doddridge, *Notes,* 63; Young, *Toadstool Millionaires,* 3, 7.

Chapter 6—
Acute Diseases

1. Kenneth F. Kiple, ed., *Cambridge World History of Human Disease* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 262, 285

2. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 163–64; John Wesley, *Primitive Physic*, 26th ed. (New York, 1804).

3. John B. Giardeau to a lady, Sarah P. Maxwell Papers, Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.; Fries, ed., *Records*, 2:572.

4. Fries, ed., *Records*, 2:571, 572.

5. Ibid., 1:379.

6. Byrd, *Histories*, 143; Buchan, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, 430, 443; Peter Kalm, *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America: The English Version of 1770*, ed. Adolph B. Benson (New York: Dover, 1966), 189, 109; Benjamin Smith Barton, *Collections for an Essay towards a Materia Medica of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1810), 1:11–12.

7. Barton, *Collections*, 2:16.

8. Fries, ed., *Records*, 1:336.

9. Ibid., 2:846.

10. Ibid., 2:582; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 70; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 106.

11. Alice Barnwell Keith, ed., "William Maclean's Travel Journal from Lincolnton, North Carolina, to Nashville, Tennessee, May–June, 1811," *North Carolina Historical Review* 15 (October 1938): 387.

12. Fries, ed., *Records*, 3:1283.

13. Ibid., 4:1691, 1749–51, 1769–70, 1778, 5:2119; James Kershaw Diary (1792–94), South Caroliniana Collection, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

14. Fries, ed., *Records*, 6:2680.

15. Ibid., 6:2691, 2708.

16. Ibid., 5:2006, 6:2707, 2709, 2705.

17. Waterhouse diary.

18. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 312; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 41, 80.

19. Joseph Strong journal no. 3, 1816 (Savannah to Knoxville), Special Collections, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; James Thacher, *American Modern Practice* (Boston, 1826), 769.

20. David Riesman, "Deceased Diseases," *Annals of Medical History*, n.s., 8 (1936): 163–64.

21. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 28; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 273.

22. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 21.

23. Ibid., 51.

24. Fries, ed., *Records*, 2:565, 571, 568, 567, 564; Byrd, *Histories*, 156.

25. Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 552.

26. Kiple, ed., *Cambridge World History*, 262–63, 1059–63.

27. Doddridge, *Notes*, 120.

28. John Tobler, ed., *South Carolina and Georgia Almanack* (Charleston, 1767), n.p.

29. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 48.

30. Robert Wilson to Rev. Samuel Wilson, March 27, 1798, Glenn Papers.

31. J. Hooker to Edward Hooker, March 14, 1809, Hooker Letters and Papers.

32. Doddridge, *Notes*, 119.

33. Ibid., 116; Kiple, ed., *Cambridge World History*, 654–56.

34. Kiple, ed., *Cambridge World History*, 266, 990–92; Webber, ed., "Extracts," 20.

35. Fries, ed., *Records*, 5:2365, 2357.

36. Ibid., 5:2379.

37. Karen Hess, *Martha Washington's Book of Cookery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 274; Asbury, *Journal and Letters*, 492.

38. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 293.

39. Ibid., 292.

40. Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia Officinalis*, 156, 227; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 292.

41. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 128.

42. Kiple, ed., *Cambridge World History*, 820–25, 1075.

43. Asbury, *Journal and Letters*, 1:517; Fries, ed., *Records*, 6:2624, 3:1068.

44. Kiple, ed., *Cambridge World History*, 642–45.

45. Fries, ed., *Records*, 2:522.

46. A. R. Newsome, ed., "John Brown's Journal of Travel in Western North Carolina in 1795," *North Carolina Historical Review* 11 (October 1934): 290.

47. Byrd, *Histories*, 62, 65; Asbury, *Journal and Letters*, 1:711–12.

48. Elizabeth Potts commonplace book, circa 1804 (Maryland), Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 46.

49. Eliza Smith, *The Compleat Housewife; or, Accomplish'd Gentlewoman's Companion*, 7th ed. (London, 1742), 358.

50. John George Hohman, *The Long Lost Friend* (1820; Harrisburg, Pa., 1856), 25.

51. Gunn, *Gunn's Domestic Medicine*, 416.

52. Fries, ed., *Records*, 5:2199, 6:2524.

53. Lucy Kennerly Gump, "Possessions and Patterns of Living in Washington County: The Twenty Years before Tennessee Statehood, 1777–1796," master's thesis, Eastern Tennessee State University, 1989.

54. Doddridge, *Notes*, 116.

55. Kiple, ed., *Cambridge World History*, 603, 784.

56. Fall, ed., *Diary of Robert Rose*, 26–27.

57. James Wilson to Samuel Wilson, October 4, 1796, Glenn Papers.

58. Ibid.; Pinckney, "Letters," 144,

59. Fall, ed., *Diary of Robert Rose*, 41.

60. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 400.

61. Kiple, ed., *Cambridge World History*, 521–26.

Chapter 7—
Chronic Internal Complaints

1. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 648, 725.

2. Lenoir may have meant to write *lye* here. *Chamber lye* is human urine, of which Quincy wrote, "Some commend it boil'd to the Consistence of Honey for Rheumatic Pains; rubbing it into the Parts affected. . . . it may do good; because it cannot but be very penetrating" (*Pharmacopoeia*, 238–39).

3. Ibid., 156.

4. Doddridge, *Notes*, 119.

5. Kalm, *Peter Kalm's Travels*, 146; Byrd, *Histories*, 242; Fries, ed., *Records*, 2:582, 578.

6. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 101.

7. Barton, *Collections*, pt. 2, 27.

8. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 101; Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, 43.

9. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 416–17.

10. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 75; *Edinburgh New Dispensatory*, 293.

11. Wesley, *Primitive Physic*, 76.

13. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 411–13; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 56–59.

14. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 411.

15. Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 120, 161–63; *Edinburgh New Dispensatory*, 296.

16. Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 226.

17. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 24.

18. Josiah Polk casebook, circa 1740–60 (Salisbury, Maryland), Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C., 170–71.

19. Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 415.

20. Asbury, *Journal and Letters*, 1:136.

21. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 356; Archibald Maclaine commonplace book, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 149; Eliza Smith, *Compleat Housewife*, 353–54.

22. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 356.

23. Ibid., 354–57.

24. Eliza Smith, *Compleat Housewife*, 24; Thomas Johnson, *Every Man His Own Doctor; or, The Poor Man's Family Physician* (Salisbury, N.C., 1798), 20, 29; Culpeper, *English Physician*, 33.

25. Johnson, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, 18.

26. Culpeper, *English Physician*, 163–64; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 122, 164.

27. John Gerard, *The Herbal or General History of Plants: The Complete 1633 Edition as Revised and Enlarged by Thomas Johnson* (New York: Dover, 1975), 1126; Culpeper, *English Physician*, 35; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 95; *Edinburgh New Dispensatory*, 192.

28. Doddridge, *Notes*, 121.

29. Culpeper, *English Physician*, 295; Fries, ed., *Records*, 2:576.

Chapter 8—
Chronic External Complaints

1. Newsome, ed., "John Brown's Journal," 300; Doddridge, *Notes*, 119; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 440–41.

2. Culpeper, *English Physician*, 123–24, 115–16; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 150, 132, 141, 147; *Edinburgh New Dispensatory*, 304.

3. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 440, 509.

4. Eliza Smith, *Compleat Housewife*, 308.

5. Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 670.

6. Philip Miller, *The Gardener's Dictionary* (London, 1759), n.p.

7. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 36, 82, 104. Treacle (or theriaca) was also an ancient name for a mixture of many ingredients considered a remedy for poison.

8. Ibid., 50.

9. Alexander Thomson, *Family Physician*, 352.

10. Ibid., 352–53; *Edinburgh New Dispensatory*, 271; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 128.

11. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 128; Alexander Thomson, *Family Physician*, 353.

12. Culpeper, *English Physician*, 239, 361; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 161, 133; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 36.

13. Eliza Smith, *Compleat Housewife*, 272–73.

14. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 627–28; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 34; Lyman C. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1974), 365.

15. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 617.

16. *Edinburgh New Dispensatory*, 591; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 298.

17. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 626–30; Doddridge, *Notes*, 119; Fries, ed., *Records*, 2:568; Buchan, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, 460.

18. Doddridge, *Notes*, 116; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 631.

19. Eliza Smith, *Compleat Housewife*, 302; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 36, 37.

20. Eliza Smith, *Compleat Housewife*, 277.

21. Samuel H. Steelman Papers, vol. 11, 1775–89 (Guilford County), Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

22. Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia*, 90.

23. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 364.

24. Eliza Smith, *Compleat Housewife*, 298.

25. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 95.

Chapter 9—
Disorders of the Senses

1. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 497; Grizey Moore to daughter Nancy Moore, February 9, 1798, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; G. Motherby, *A New Medical Dictionary*, with revisions and additions by George Wallis (London, 1791); Laurence Heister, *A General System of Surgery in Three Parts* (London, 1757), 335.

2. Fries, ed., *Records*, 5:2156.

3. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 702.

4. Ibid., 723.

5. Ibid., 702; Wesley, *Primitive Physic*, 38.

6. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 62.

7. *Edinburgh New Dispensatory*, 617; Thacher, *American Modern Practice*, 775.

8. Johnson, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, 1.

9. Fries, ed., *Records*, 2:567.

10. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 503.

11. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 500–503; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 54–55, 59–60.

12. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 54–55.

13. Ibid., 55; Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, 67; Johnson, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, 29; Culpeper, *English Physician*, 148, 237.

14. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 502, 392; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 60.

15. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 360.

16. Fries, ed., *Records*, 2:905.

17. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 33; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 362; Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, 45; Henry Wilkins, *The Family Adviser . . . to Which Is Annexed Mr. Wesley's Primitive Physic, Revised* (New York, 1804), 68–69.

18. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 361; Johnson, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, 21; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 33.

19. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 98; Johnson, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, 21.

20. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 391; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 119; Eliza Smith, *Compleat Housewife*, 288.

21. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies*, 118–19; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 390; Kalm, *Peter Kalm's Travels*, 227.

22. Letter dated 1812, Bertie County, N.C., Nicholls Papers.

23. Thomas Anburey, *Travels through the Interior Parts of America, 1777–1781* (1789; New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1960), 450; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 3d ed., 391; Thomas Ewell, *Letters to Ladies*, 49–50.

24. Eliza Smith, *Compleat Housewife,* 336–37; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 390.

25. Byrd, *Histories,* 243; Hugh Buckner Johnston, ed., "The Journal of Ebenezer Hazard in North Carolina, 1777 and 1778," *North Carolina Historical Review* 36 (July 1959): 376; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 390; Eliza Smith, *Compleat Housewife,* 253.

26. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 389; Kalm, *Peter Kalm's Travels,* 228; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 119.

27. Kalm, *Peter Kalm's Travels,* 228.

28. Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:582.

29. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 390–91.

30. J. Hooker to Edward Hooker, October 1, 1812, Hooker Letters and Papers.

Chapter 10—
Poisoning

1. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 514–15.

2. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 46, 94.

3. Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:564, 574.

4. John Tobler, ed., *South Carolina and Georgia Almanack,* 1759 (Charleston, 1769), n.p.

5. Culpeper, *English Physician,* 258; Johnson, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 20; Doddridge, Notes, 117.

6. Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:565–72.

7. Ibid., 2:565; Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 62–63; Johnson, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 20.

8. Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:560.

9. Ibid., 2:566; Doddridge, *Notes,* 117.

10. Doddridge, *Notes,* 118.

11. Fries, ed., *Records,* 5:2173.

12. Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 62; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 528.

13. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 124; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 528; Doddridge, *Notes,* 118; William L. Anderson, "Palisot De Beauvois and Cherokee Snake-bite Remedies," trans. Roger Bisson, *Journal of Cherokee Studies* 9 (spring 1984): 4–9.

14. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 88; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 524.

15. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 518–27; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 88; Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 63–64; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia,* 493.

16. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 522–23.

17. Byrd, *Histories,* 43; Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 61.

18. Fries, ed., *Records,* 1:304, 3:1305.

19. Anburey, *Travels,* 396; Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:583; Byrd, *Histories,* 43.

20. Kalm, *Peter Kalm's Travels,* 180, 216.

21. Glasse, *Art of Cookery,* 386–87; Jane Carpenter Kellar, Ellen Miller, and Paul Stambach, eds., *On the Score of Hospitality: Selected Receipts of a Van Rensselaer Family, Albany, New York, 1785–1835*. (Albany, N.Y.: Historic Cherry Hill, 1986), 60.

22. George Swain to Calvin Jones, January 26, 1810, Jones Papers.

23. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 542, 724; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia,* 517.

24. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 561.

25. Kiple, ed., *Cambridge World History,* 1054–55; Thomas C. Parramore, "The 'Country Distemper' in Colonial North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 48 (January 1971): 44–52; John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina,* ed. Hugh Talmage Lefler (Chapel Hill: University. of North Carolina Press, 1984), 25–26.

26. William Byrd, "A Progress to the Mines in the Year 1732," in *The Prose Works of William Byrd of Westover,* ed. Louis B. Wright (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1966), 341; Lawson, *New Voyage,* 25, 231.

27. John Brickell, *The Natural History of North Carolina* (1737; Murfreesboro, N.C.: Johnson Publishing, 1968), 48–49; Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 57–58.

28. Pinckney, "Letters," 144.

Chapter 11—
Women's Disorders

1. Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 572.

2. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 89; Fries, ed., *Records,* 2:574; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia,* 217; Culpeper, *English Physician,* 166.

3. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 90; Tennent, *Every Man His Own Doctor,* 44–45; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 574.

4. Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia,* 97; *Edinburgh New Dispensatory,* 274; Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 90, 129.

5. *Edinburgh New Dispensatory,* 295–96.

6. Wesley, *Primitive Remedies,* 77.

7. Austin family memorandum book, late eighteenth-early nineteenth century, private collection, Alexander County, N.C.

8. Culpeper, *English Physician,* 80; Gerard, *Herbal or General History,* 548.

9. Culpeper, *English Physician,* 365; Quincy, *Pharmacopoeia,* 99; *Edinburgh New Dispensatory,* 231.

10. Catherine M. Scholten, "'On the Importance of the Obstetrick Art': Changing Customs of Childbirth in America, 1760 to 1825," *William and Mary Quarterly* 34 (1977): 426–45.

11. David Ramsay, "A Review of the Improvements, Progress, and State of Medicine in the XVIIIth Century," 213.

12. Woodmason, *Carolina Backcountry,* 53.

13. Sam Warren to Dr. Warren, January 22, 1766, Caroliniana Collection, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

14. Thomas Ewell, *Letters to Ladies,* 24; also quoted in Horton Howard, *An Im-*

proved System of Botanic Medicine (Columbus, Ohio, 1836), 3:68, 70. Howard exercised a strong voice in support of female midwives in the mid-nineteenth century.

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25. Thomas Ewell, *Letters to Ladies,* 35–42, 213.

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29. *Edinburgh New Dispensatory,* 156.

30. Ramsay, "Review," 200.

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3. Draper, *Kings Mountain,* 506.

4. James Smith, *Scoouwa: James Smith's Indian Captivity Narrative* (1799; Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1992), 128–29.

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6. Ibid., 412–13.

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8. Thomas Ewell, *Letters to Ladies,* 96; also quoted in Howard, *An Improved System of Botanic Medicine,* 3:40–41; Buchan, *Domestic Medicine,* 3d ed., 351; William Buchan, *Domestic Medicine; or, A Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases by Regimen and Simple Medicines,* 14th ed. (London, 1794), 322–23.

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3. Gunn, *Gunn's Domestic Medicine,* 434.

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